

Redesigning The Medieval Book



A catalogue to accompany an exhibition of new work inspired by medieval books and manuscripts from the Bodleian Library.



Bower Ashton Library • 19 April – 29 June 2018

Bower Ashton Library, UWE Bristol, Kennel Lodge Road, Bristol BS3 2JT

www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/pdf/bodleian.pdf

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We are very grateful to all of the artists for their participation.

Many thanks are also due to Madeline Slaven, Jennifer Varallo and Ellen Hausner at The Bodleian Libraries, Professor Daniel Wakelin and Sarah Bodman for all of their support for this extension of the original exhibition.

All introductory text by Daniel Wakelin, the Jeremy Griffiths Professor of Medieval English Palaeography at Oxford.
Book descriptions are the artist statements which accompanied the original competition submissions.

Catalogue compiled and designed by Corinne Welch.

background

*And out of olde bokes, in good feyth,
Cometh al this new science . . .*

So says Geoffrey Chaucer, an English poet of the 1300s, in *The Parliament of Fowls*: from old books, we get new knowledge, new inspiration. Is it true? Can we still learn from the books of the past? Although we can no longer read their words easily, might they nonetheless inspire us?

In December 2017 the Bodleian Libraries in Oxford opened *Designing English*, an exhibition of its medieval manuscripts – books made, copied and illustrated entirely by hand from the 800s to the early 1500s.

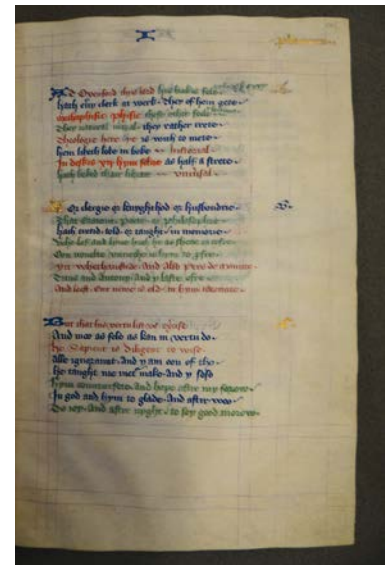
To accompany it, the curator invited contemporary artists and craftspeople to take inspiration from these *olde bokes*. Some forty artists, in media from embroidery to video, attended workshops to see and handle those medieval books. They and others received a design brief with a portfolio of images of those books, and with excerpts of medieval texts gathered by the curator. In response, fifty-six artists made new books – or alternatives to books – inspired by what they saw, for a competition and display in the Bodleian Library. That display is reprised here.

The pieces made show how we might be inspired by medieval book design, in the crafts, arts and digital technology of our own age. Books outlive people, and through them the conversation of past and present stays open. We just need to keep reading and looking closely.

*I wok, and othere bokes tok me to,
To rede upon, and yit I rede alway.*



Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson D. 939.



Oxford, Bodleian Library,
MS Duke Humfrey d. 2, fol. 21r
Photograph © Daniel Wakelin,
courtesy of The Bodleian Libraries



Oxford, Bodleian Library,
MS Rawlinson poet. 223, fol. 183r.

inspiration

Until printing in English began, in Belgium in 1473/4, books in English were made entirely by hand. This is the origin of our word *manuscript* – from the Latin ‘written by hand’.

Given this medium, medieval people had to be graphic designers every time they wrote or carved their words. While the printing press is handled by professionals and makes multiple copies, handwriting is like digital technology: medieval people used their hands to make books for themselves, and each copy of a text could be redesigned afresh. The carver and philosopher David Pye (1914–1993) called writing and carving the ‘workmanship of risk’: when you put pen to paper, *anything can happen*. You might improve the plan each time you copy; a problem prompts an improvised solution; you ‘take a line for a walk’. The people making medieval books, copying and illustrating medieval English, were designing and redesigning as they went along.

Moreover, books in English – Old English, before the Norman Conquest, and Middle English after it – were less prestigious than ones in French and Latin, so often look rough or ‘homespun’. But these conditions sometimes forced, or even freed, their makers to work in unconventional ways. And capturing the everyday tongue, English, and the everyday experiences it expressed was always an experiment – at times, as countercultural as graffiti.

Make-do-and-mend and delight in novelty: these things are palpable in medieval manuscripts in English, and indeed in many other languages. Though the English spelling and script are unfamiliar, and some of the writers’ ideas are alien or anathema today, we can sense the ingenuity and imagination in their craft processes of design. And some of the design solutions in the handmade books of the past are ones we still recognise and use today.



Designing English:
Graphics on the Medieval Page
exhibition at the Bodleian Library

Photographs © Greg Smolonski (Photovibe),
courtesy of the Bodleian Libraries



A medieval girdle book

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 6.



**A contemporary interpretation
of a girdle book**

© Jill Lauriston

responses

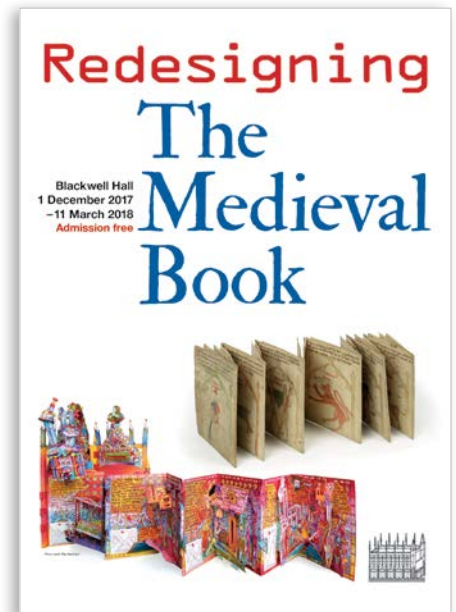
The works for this competition capture the creativity and cleverness found in manuscripts centuries old. Asked to bring to life unfamiliar books and stories, the artists responded with similar inventiveness. Just as medieval scribes had to make space for English, how do modern artists make room for the world today in imitation or in dialogue with the Middle Ages?

The thread is unbroken: many artists showed that crafts dating back centuries such as calligraphy or embroidery are still thriving today. They can be used to make works of poignancy – bloody violence told in fine lettering, on animal skins stitched with red thread; they can be used with self-referential humour. Several reminded us that medieval experimental formats – calendars, concertina books, rolls – are common in artists' books now, but are used to tell different stories: medieval saints in calendars are replaced with modern heroes – Rosa Parks, Ella Fitzgerald.

Others turned to new media which might suit medieval literature: the role of the dice of medieval Fortune suits the chances of the board game; the scrolling screen of animation unrolls a pilgrim's guide better than a book might. And people showed a medieval spirit of improvisation by adapting new materials to new ends. Recycled junk mail forms a palimpsest for a book in Esperanto, which might replace English one day; a smartphone turns out to fit snugly inside a medieval 'girdle book'.

And several artists responded to the medieval books – and the way they are cherished by institutions like the Bodleian Library – with humour or friendly critique. Is it wrong to relish medieval manuscripts made from animal skins, as most were? Can the experiences of women, so often obscured in medieval books, be brought into focus by adjusting words and images?

To open the books of the past is not to be cowed by them; it is to start a conversation.



Redesigning The Medieval Book
at the Bodleian Library

© Greg Smolonski (Photovibe),
courtesy of the Bodleian Libraries



Competition winner: Sue Doggett
*The 2018 Almanac for
the Modern Medievalist*

winner

The 2018 Almanac for the Modern Medievalist

Digitally printed with addition of drawing ink, coloured pencil and rubber stamps.
The cover is suede and nylon fabric, with machine and hand embroidery



This Eco Almanac is a primarily a calendar but is so much more. A multi-purpose year-planner, diary and daybook, it aims to be of use to people of all creeds, sexual orientation, sporting interests and those with a keen eye on the weather and the future. For those who enjoy travel, it contains a handy month by month celestial sat nav. Additionally, this almanac is of particular interest to those who are bored with historical gender-bias and fancy a bit of a change from traditional saint's days and holidays. And, if that wasn't enough, the luxurious, hand-sewn cover doubles up as a handy game board for everyone's favourite, Nine Men's Morris – with the option of three-men and twelve-men at no extra cost.

The content of this convenient, multi-purpose and easy to carry aide-memoire has been chosen by the publisher. Whilst we aim to be inclusive, we are inevitably biased. In age-old tradition, we the publishers make no apology for this; we have our own agenda. However, we have thoughtfully included space for you to add your own historical events and persons of note.

This almanac is guilt-free. It is re-usable and each one is made entirely from recycled materials. This edition is made from an old pair of suede boots and an apron. The almanac itself is constructed from old artists' books and off-prints, including *Boccaccio's Lives of Women*. The only new materials are the sewing thread and the printing ink!

Sue Doggett

London

Serenade to Chaucer

Paper



How would medieval binders and illuminators respond to the availability of pop-up paper engineering techniques? This book, which was nearly three hundred hours in the making, attempts to address this question. It integrates the architecture of the Bodleian Library with arguably Chaucer's most uproarious Canterbury tale.

Front cover – entrance to the Divinity School.

Back cover – a compilation of the doorway and window above the entrance in the quadrangle.

Spine (base) – entrance from Radcliffe Square.

Spine (top and section over cover and clasp) – The Tower of the Five Orders (excessively elongated like an image in a distortion mirror) realised as a fairground big dipper on which Chaucer and his fellow pilgrims ride.

Clasp – Canterbury Cathedral (outside), Bodleian Library (inside).

Book contents

Chaucer's *The Miller's Tale* abridged to four pop-up spreads that also illustrates the four seasons and major festivals of the religious calendar. Each spread contains an envelope holding diary entries describing the making of the book, chronologically, and recorded concurrent events in the life of the book artist.

Display

The book can either be opened to a 360-degree carousel, or releasing the final spread from its (hidden) paper clip attachment pulled out as an accordion book. It is possible for almost the whole book – covers, spine, clasp and pages to be seen from a frontal viewpoint. As the book is completely hollow it is surprisingly light in weight.

Paul Johnson

Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire

runner-up

The Peterborough Chronicle MCXXXVII

Lamb Nappa leather mdf, hemp cords, linen thread, bronze D-rings, brass pins, vellum, embroidery thread, Fabriano Artistico Satinata paper, black japanese stick ink, vermilion stick ink and metal pens



This terrible account was obscured for centuries as an addendum to the well known Anglo Saxon Chronicle. My intent was to give these words their own space in the most authentic setting that I could manufacture. The underlying aim was to enhance and acknowledge the power of the words rather than to make them secondary to any anachronistic modern decorative technique.

Despite their age, these facts were new to me, so I made this accurate Carolingian style binding using residual modern materials from other projects, thus representing a physical afterthought to mirror the original literal afterthought. Guidance on binding was drawn from the research by Szirmai on typical mediaeval binding styles, Carolingian being the style prevalent at the inception of the Chronicle.

I wrote the original words (provided in the brief) in contemporary script in separate paragraphs on vellum scraps using stick inks and metal dip pens. The scraps are silk sewn onto thumb sealed throw-out Fabriano paper wrappers; each inscribed with the translation of its enclosed words into modern English in a stark sans serif (grotesque) script. These sections are sewn herringbone style on hemp cords attached to tunneled and grooved mdf boards. The lamb nappa leather is a modern alternative to the hair-sheep skin that was the medieval binders' material of choice.

The resulting volume lends dignity to the commentary and allows a measured and purposeful reading of this important account, revealing physically each stage of the narrative enclosure by enclosure.

Kathy Sedar
Leicestershire

runner-up

Restrukturanta La Mezepoka Libro

Book: Recycled paper, Kozo tissue, wheat starch paste, Plaka casein paint, watercolour, graphite pencil, silverpoint

Cover: MDF, unidentified Japanese paper, PVA, wood dye, Plaka casein paint, shellac varnish, wax, acid-free paper and board, double-sided archival polyester tape, polyester cord



I have adored the look of manuscripts since I first came upon them in the British Museum as a teenager. Since I do not have the skill that scribes acquired over years of patient practice I decided to produce a rudimentary and idiosyncratic version using basic materials and relying on my own abilities.

I have allowed the processes used in the production to show in the finished piece and wherever possible tried to accommodate errors and accidents. Most rulings and under-drawing have been left visible, as have indications of paint application. One of the things that delights me about manuscripts is the very unique quality that comes from their being made by hand so I wanted all the brush marks, stencil edges, variations in ink density etc. to be part of the work.

The subject matter has been the production of medieval books itself and I became particularly interested in the possibility for different page sequences before a book is bound. Information about some of the ideas has been incorporated into the text of the book. The medieval willingness to experiment with text layout was also a strong influence on the final design.

I wanted the book to feel as if it had already had previous uses and was building up layers of existence, finally being appropriated for the addition of the poetry which takes over the margins rather than the main text blocks.

Roy Willingham (with the poet Mike Sims)

London

special commendation

Invisible

Somerset Satin paper, greyboard, bookcloth, hand carved rubber stamps



The first thing I was drawn to was the medical remedies and charms. I knew very quickly that I wanted to work with the charm – *To Be Invisible*. Looking at the mood board I loved the folding books and almanacs. The simplistic drawing and limited colour palette was reminiscent of rubber stamp printing. I wanted to use a medieval typeface and began researching Blackletter. I used a font called Old London which was the closest I could find to it. However, I did not like the letter V. I found a piece of text from a Latin Bible dated 1407 which is in Malmesbury Abbey, and used the V from there.

Taking the structure of medieval folding books and the typeface I began working with these two elements. I also looked at block books and realised that as difficult as it was for me to carve the typeface in rubber, how difficult it must have been to carve this in wood.

I had a lot of elaborate ideas to start with, but wondered what it was about the almanacs that was so beautiful? A Ben Jonson poem came to mind: *The Grace of Simplicity*, particularly the line “*Than all the adulteries of art; They strike mine eyes, but not my heart*”.

This made me realise, with all the progression in digital technology something that is simply beautiful can be more striking. I wanted my interpretation to be faithful to the grace of simplicity, hopefully I have achieved this.

Angela Callanan

Cardiff

special commendation

The Matter of Jerusalem

Animation



This animation is inspired by William Wey's manuscript (Bodleian, MS Bodley 565). This is both a journal of Wey's travels and a guidebook for others – following his Jerusalem pilgrimages in 1458 and 1462.

Our animation project focuses on pilgrimage and visual movement, and seeks to reimagine medieval manuscripts and ideas of visual storytelling with a contemporary take. We combine sources and media in order to explore medieval ways of seeing. If the medieval page is really 'alive', as scholars have suggested, can contemporary digital animation engage in

a stimulating encounter with the often strange but beautiful images and texts we find in medieval manuscripts? Our methodology is 'medieval': the project is constructed entirely from things we have read in medieval texts or found in medieval visual culture.

We put ourselves in a similar position to the medieval artist, who was imagining things based largely on received stories and depictions.

This kind of hybridity of styles, levels, and registers is itself something we have taken from medieval manuscripts.

The submission is the first part of a short animation called 'The Matter of Jerusalem' (after Wey's book). We follow Wey's route from Venice to Jaffa to Jerusalem. We use the opening lines of Wey's poem about Jaffa (note, for example, the hens that Wey advises one should buy in Venice).

Shay Hamias is an animation artist and film-maker with experience on a diverse range of films. His work insistently explores the creative visual possibilities between design, motion, and narrative.

Shay Hamias (with Anthony Bale)

London

The Pilgrim Shoe

Leather, artificial sinew, watercolour and acrylic paint, calligraphers ink, wood, paper, metal studs, starch paste and wax



Guided by the Anthology of possible Texts, the 'Pilgrim Shoe' was made in response to 'The Canterbury Tales' by Geoffrey Chaucer, inspired by following points in the brief:

- Where and on what should you write if you seek 'to do things with words'?
- Does form always fit function? Does a function only have one form?
- Is looking more sensuous than reading?

I approached the project from the perspective of a Medieval Cordwainer seeking to attract wealthy customers and found that although it was common practice to decorate shoes by engraving or cutting patterns into the leather, other forms of decoration were rare during Medieval times.

An inventive Cordwainer might have thought of personalising shoes for specific purposes or events using text, images, or even a charm for luck.

With this in mind I made a Poulaine style shoe with wooden patten specifically for Chaucers' *The Lady of Bath* who may have been attracted by the decorated shoe both as a unique, sensuous status symbol and a map with which to find her way from London to Canterbury. Such a shoe might have been admired or found useful by fellow pilgrims en-route, and with a recipe for love (from the Anthology of texts) concealed within the rein-forced heel, perhaps she might attract a new husband during her pilgrimage.

I hand painted images and added calligraphic text on the shoe. The place references from London to Canterbury were researched using various historical sources including the Gough Map: www.goughmap.org/about/

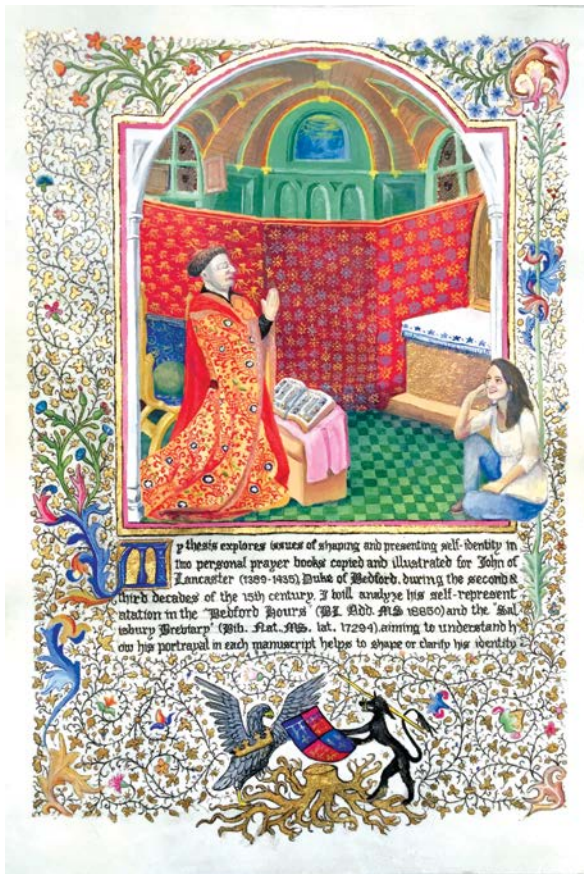
Additional credits: wooden patten made by Ernst Allen, and passage of calligraphy on paper charm by Eileen Gomme

Jules Allen

Reepham, Norfolk

My Lord of Bedford and I

Tempera colours, gold leaf, and ink on parchment



I am currently working on my Master's degree in the field of Illuminated Manuscripts, at the Art History department in Tel-Aviv University, Israel. My thesis explores issues of shaping and presenting self-identity in two personal prayer books of John of Lancaster (1389–1435), Duke of Bedford and Regent of France (1422–1435). Alongside my research, I am also an artist. Due to my personal interest in the Middle Ages in general and in illuminated manuscripts in particular, I chose to practise the process of their making as part of my own personal art. My works – made with tempera colors, gold leaf and ink on parchment – are based on manuscripts that I have encountered during my BA and MA studies, into which I incorporated modern elements.

This work is inspired by my MA thesis. The main miniature is based on folio 256v from the *Bedford Hours* (London, BL Add. MS 18850), featuring the Duke of Bedford kneeling in prayer in front of St. George. I decided to present the Duke immersed in prayer, without the saint, while my own figure examines him from the margins – as this is the purpose of my research. The border decorations are based on the *Salisbury Breviary* (Paris, BnF, MS lat. 17294), which was commissioned by the Duke of Bedford from the same workshop that made his book of hours. The text, written in Gothic Script, was taken from my research proposal.

Orly Amit

Israel

Now and Then

Woodcut, pochoir, stamp, and digital print



In my artistic practice I have an experiential approach, which is driven by a desire to tell stories, and I couldn't help but notice certain themes running through the books we were shown in the Bodleian workshop.

In particular how the farming year was integral to the medieval world. How most people at that time would have been acutely aware of the reality of, and in fact been involved intimately in, food production.

It occurred to me that our current means of food production is a much more remote affair, predominantly played out politically and in the futures markets. As a consequence of this 'distance' we have a lack of connection and understanding, whereby it is easy for advertisers to manipulate the reality by implying idealistic farms (not unlike a medieval pastoral scene) disguising the casual cruelty caused to millions of animals in modern industrial factory farming.

I liked the contrast of Now with Then and in designing this book I aimed to show the allusion (an innocent white bull calf) underpinned by the reality (decapitated calves heads) the text emphasising the illusoriness of industrial farming.

The materiality of the handmade is an important aspect of re-imagining the medieval book (the books we looked at were all handwritten and hand-drawn). Handprinted and hand-bound the concertina book format makes direct connection with those medieval books.

Mavina Baker

Denton, Oxfordshire

The baby sheep's book

Wool, silk, linen feathers, parchment, ink, sterling silver, wood, assorted gemstones, enamel and copper



When considering how I might respond to the brief I was struck by the contrast between the extreme youth of the animals used to make parchment and the longevity of the resulting books. This provoked me to make a medieval babies book in the form of the cloth scroll for the education of young sheep, for as we know young sheep are inclined to stray and are in need of moral education. Whilst making this piece, my contemplation of the physical relationship of scribe to parchment correlated to and illuminated the intimate relationship I develop with my canvas as an embroiderer, working with the nature of sheep and silkworm and repairing damage inherent to the organic nature of the material. I prefer to work with medieval embroidery techniques and naturally dyed fibres because I find the limitations of colour and texture bizarrely liberating. Working this way I find that creativity isn't limited by agonising over choices of colour when there are fewer colours to choose from.

Tanya Bentham

Redcar, North Yorkshire

Love and Toothache, 2017

Folded screenprint on Somerset paper, leather binding with inlays.

Vellum slip case with screenprint, bookcloth box with vellum and leather detail



Intrigued by the relationship between the form, design and provenance of the books presented at the Bodleian, I was inspired to make a book, case and box that reflected a dual narrative. The direct narrative within the texts; potions to cure toothache and encourage love, evoked a second narrative of ownership; an imagined provenance in which the 'gat-toothed' advocate of love, the Wife of Bath, takes this book in its case on her Canterbury pilgrimage. This English first aid kit is specific to its owner, with her name inserted into the text. Finally, I imagined the book and case as a museum artefact kept in its red box and identified by the raised image on the front.

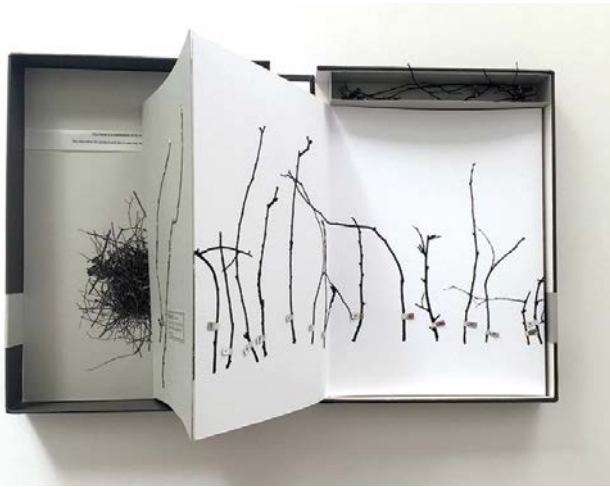
Incised guides on manuscript pages are echoed in the inlaid leather lines on the book's cover and in the lines drawn beneath the text on which an image of the Wife rides. The red, used throughout, refers to Chaucer's description of the Wife of Bath's clothing. The toothache cure is in contemporary English with modern screenprinted imagery, this potion is no odder than many food fads today, and so I gave it a modern twist with the ingredients finally made into a sandwich for exponents of clean living. The Wife of Bath text and images are from a 1561 printed book of Chaucer's works. The love potion and toothache cure are both incidental texts made central to this book, thus reflecting the move of English texts from a peripheral to a central role.

Kate Bernstein

Bristol

Nest Book

Mixed media



There are many small and beautiful things in the world with great meaning. It is important to show the phenomenological significance and potential of these seemingly insignificant objects.

The book is a contemporary version of an essentially folkloric tale about how a nest was found and used to describe the frailty and courage of a bird. This book is essentially an inventory of a bird's nest, and is a significant insight into the life of a nest building bird.

"What is this life, so full of care, we have no time to stand and stare..." (William Henry Davies)

The nest was deconstructed, and the twigs from which it was made were labelled (as a bird is ringed) using a silver paper resembling metal. The concertina book is composed of an 8 metre long photographic print of all the twigs from the nest – a contemporary process which highlights the amount of organic material found in the nest. Interspersed are "bookmarks" with significant, descriptive information about the nest, showing how complex, intricate, and instinctive such an act of making can be.

When I found this bird's nest I thought a book was an appropriate tribute to the infinite, poetic variety of nature. Nests are primal refuges. The mythical qualities we adhere to them are reminiscent of the Middle Ages and they still apply today.

The book reflects the excitement of the discovery and analysis of making the inaccessible become tangible and accessible.

Lizzie Brewer

Teddington, Middlesex

Mythical Magical Physickal Madness

Inkjet print, bookcloth, leather string, linen string, wooden hardboard, linen



As a very creative person I've actively done several academic degrees, jobs, and personal projects focused on art, literature, science, public health, laws and crimes, nature, and archaeology. I created an artist book containing illustrations and a literary anthology of historic English texts about the evolution of culture from the medieval to the early modern era. I spent a year doing the research, translations, illustrations, and invention of a special binding method of this book – *Mythical Magical Physickal Madness*. Two copies were printed and bound. One was submitted to the Designer Bookbinders' international competition and was included in the Heroic Works exhibition at the Bodleian's Weston Library in Oxford, that began in July 2017.

The contents of this book are much more important to me than the binding. It includes texts most academic experts would consider unrelated – but they are all related to the history of rabies and medieval medical ideas: legal policies, health practices, tales, sources of witchcraft expertise, madness caused by women, mad dog bites, theatrical plays that include characters who are witches with mad dog pets, theories and laws that initially require and ultimately prohibit the murders of witches for causing deaths via rabies, and various medical treatments for rabies.

The illustrations were created by adapting elements of illustrations of historic characters found in antique books, with faces adapted from 19th century photographs. The backgrounds are historic landscapes photographed in Scotland, Wales and England while I visited and explored the UK during the autumn of 2013.

Susan Brown (aka Kitty MacBalfour)

Washington, USA

For Love

Digital embroidery on silk and linen



I am a multi-disciplined visual artist, combining drawing, traditional printmaking and embroidery to explore cultural values throughout history, which in turn comments on modern life.

A key inspiration for my book was the story of the Wife of Bath, a tale that explores the role of women in Medieval society. In her prologue, the Wife of Bath mentions the Aesopian fable about the painting of a lion. A lion complains about a painting that shows a man killing a lion, stating that if the lion had painted the image it would have turned out differently, illustrating the concept of subjective truth. The Wife of Bath states that women are painted in much the same way, in the eyes of how a man thinks she should be. I used this notion to take on the concept of Medieval romance and the image of the meek princess.

The remedy for love is a perfectly nauseating passage to accompany this, and it is hard not to wonder if this was written as a joke. As the decorative pages unfold, a pretty Princess listens intently to the author, our very own Prince Charming, but underneath the veil you can find the real woman, disenchanted and frustrated.

Embroidery was a gender neutral craft in the Medieval period, but it has evolved to be seen as a skewed representation of feminine ideology. Digitally embroidery, a modern day technology, resembles a calculated strength and assertiveness that represents the woman behind the veil.

Lisa Davies

Bristol

Beast Book

Cream laid paper, white card and gold paper laser prints, rubber stamping, found brass rubbing, hot-foil transfer, stickers, thread, glue



There are two main aspects of the Bodleian manuscripts that *Beast Book* responds to:

1. The haptic and design qualities of the manuscripts. They all had a tactile quality and carried marks of repeated handling. The variety of different sizes and shapes of manuscript, together with unexpected foldouts and inserts were also important design considerations for me.

I wanted *Beast Book* to reflect the individuality of these manuscripts and to also include the element of surprise, of not quite knowing what was inside.

2. The fact that the survival of medieval manuscripts is due to the fact that they were made from parchment and that this long-lasting material was produced from animal skins. I wanted *Beast Book* to acknowledge how parchment is made together with the history of the process. It was fortunate in that the subject became headline news and I could incorporate modern references. The torn corners of the book mimic the shape of skins when opened out but also reflect the fragility of paper.

I felt that *Beast Book* should be contemporary in design but also have a high degree of hand-finishing and embellishment. I wanted it to retain some of the mystery of a medieval manuscript, something to be studied and interpreted, and accordingly I chose to use medieval punctuation.

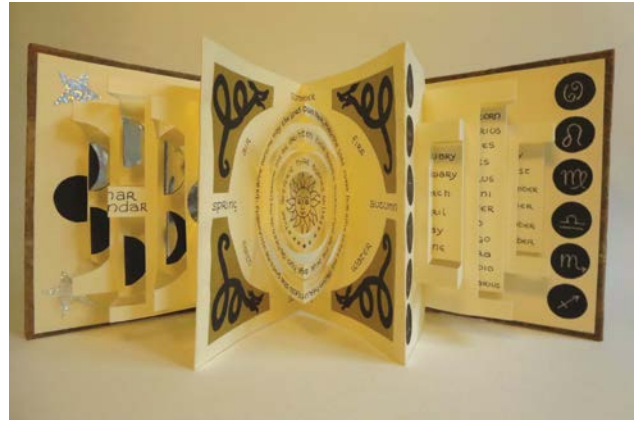
It is almost a book of poems where the text, layout, and design echo and respond to each other, meaning it can be interpreted in a number of ways dependent on the views of the reader.

Jeremy Dixon

Peterston-super-Ely, Vale of Glamorgan

Bodmanac

Paper, card, glue, teabag material, cutting and folding



I studied history at Oxford before later gaining another degree in Art and Design, which led to me becoming a book artist. I have always been fascinated by books, both their contents and their form, and my love of cutting and folding was enhanced when I lived in Denmark.

For this exhibition I wanted to address the challenge of designing a book inspired by some of the medieval illuminated manuscripts in the Bodleian, in particular the popular almanacs.

Lizanne van Essen

Cambridgeshire

Thunder Portents: a medieval board game

Ink, cardboard, wood/MDF, and gold leaf



My artwork is a reworking of the thunder portent manuscript from MS. Rawl. D. 939 (late fourteenth century). The manuscript explains what thunder signifies in each month – anything from strong winds to the fall of the state, and is illustrated with charming emoji-like symbols. It is part of a wider set of calendrical books that play around with the book format and with concepts of time, in ways that were obviously intended to be fun as well as useful.

Beautiful and complex board games are having a renaissance at the moment, and this gave me the idea of turning the thunder portents into a game. This allows modern players to experience the medieval images and ideas of time in an interactive, intimate way. It also adapts the original playfulness of the manuscripts in a way that I hope the original readers would have appreciated.

This project has been fascinating. I got to play around with gold leaf, Gothic scripts, and game design. In addition, copying the images made me *really* look at the manuscripts and caused me to notice all sorts of interesting details, connections, and techniques, which I would not otherwise have spotted.

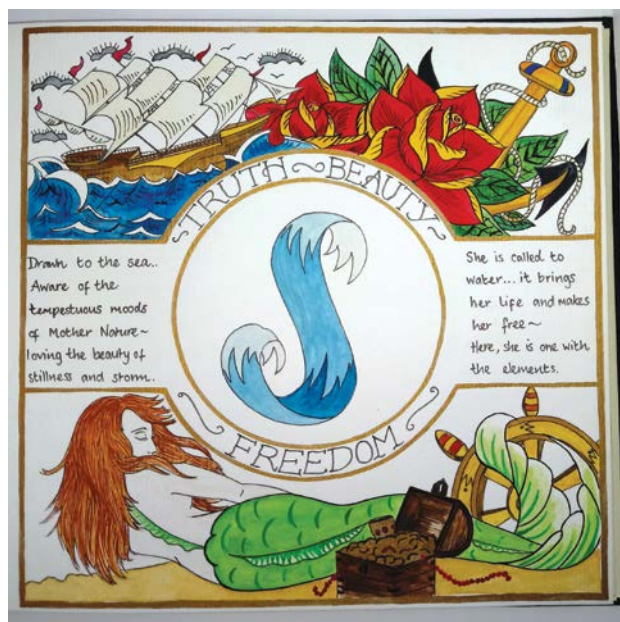
I live in Oxford. I studied Classics and now work as a dictionary editor. When not occupied with this, I spend my time drawing – both standalone pictures and book illustration projects. I am particularly interested in creating intricate, imaginary worlds influenced by history and mythology.

Imogen Foxell

Oxford

What's your Story?

Paper, pen and paint



What is the first image conjured up in your mind when you think about a medieval book?

Is it the rich binding? The gothic script? The illuminations?

For me, it is the illuminations. The theatrical setting of a letter or painting, enticing the viewer in with colour, richness and symbolism. Layered meanings wrapped up in the symbolism gave another story to enrich the first.

It is the symbolism within the medieval books that gave me the inspiration for mine.

Using neo-traditional and "Flash" tattoo designs to illuminate my story, these symbols give the layers to embellish it. You can look at it as an illustrated story or delve deeper into each symbol to link in with the tale.

My handwritten, slightly rushed scruffy style combines with the precise lines, colour and imagery to give it an intimate, personal feel, just like the jottings and doodles found in some medieval books.

Like all books, this book is designed to be read, the fingerprints or smudges left by people touching it adds the imprint of time, place and person... another layer, another story... it gives the book its soul. Without this interaction, I believe, books become lifeless and soulless.

Sandie Gent

Polegate, East Sussex

Whale Bestiary

Textiles (digitally printed cotton, sheer organzas, vilene stabiliser, felt and satin).
Textile markers, paints, permanent marker pens. Bone buttons, elastic cord



I make prints, books and textile pieces inspired by whales, whaling and Moby Dick, but have always had an interest in manuscripts and Anglo Saxon history. To explore the medieval book it was important the piece would form an integral part of my practice output. Researching suitable whale related source material, I dismissed St Brendan and Jonah, but fell with delight on the whale pages of bestiaries. Blending the imagery and expanding the narratives I developed the single page, image with caption, into four panels like a cartoon strip.

Domestic medieval textiles and painted cloths have mostly disappeared so a textile based book seemed that most interesting response. I used sing digitally printed textile to make a concertina book. The pages are hand painted with the addition of layered sheer fabrics acting like unifying glazes over the surface. The book covers can be separated enabling the book to be read conventionally or spread out in strip cartoon format. I chose not to use Old English, but Modern English using an uncial roundhand font because I wanted the text to be accessible. I used modern layout conventions with the text inside the image, but with some humour and with the occasionally element breaking into the border. The book closures are bone and antler buttons sourced on trips to Norway and Iceland.

It has been a useful and interesting project giving myself permission to indulge my passion for manuscripts, developing ideas and problem solving to produce a unified final piece.

Caroline Hack
Thetford, Norfolk

The Zodiac

Watercolour paper and drawing ink



As a calligrapher and bookbinder the Star Book construction of this Zodiac Book is analogous to our place on a small planet floating amongst a universe of heavenly stars and galaxies. The colourful background represents the varicoloured universe which modern astronomy shows we live in – stars no longer simply shine silver against a black sky. The circular format represents the cyclical nature of our world with its unending rhythm of times

and seasons. Its linear format represents the continuation of time marked by the eternal passage of day and night.

Early man established measures of time by seasons and star patterns creating a Zodiac Calendar of 12 approximately equal months beginning when spring starts with Aries. This flexibility of thinking, of being able to look back to past events and to predict future ones, moved into all areas of human life. Historic manuscripts show that as well as telling the time and the seasons the Zodiac has also been used to predict outcomes in health, love and wealth.

Today we measure time more precisely and accurately but we still like to look at our stars to see what they hold in store for us. Both the stars and the Zodiac are as important to us now as they have ever been. Its written in the stars. It is eternal.

Helen Hayman

Halifax, West Yorkshire

And Tie my Life within this Band

Portable altar: oak boards, vellum, sumi ink, quill and brush with watercolour paint and shell gold; hand dyed linen, gold coloured silk



This triptych is inspired by the materials, tools and texts of the medieval book and by the sense of purpose that caused those books to be made and which is still evident. Although not a conventional book structure, I intend the triptych to be reminiscent of the small personal devotional or contemplative books that people through time have carried with them: girde books, prayer and hymn books, gospels and books of hours.

Caedmon's hymn was my starting point, together with the Anglo-Saxon *Dream of the Rood*. These are words and sources I've used in other contexts over the years. My choices reflect the heritage of the British church, from Anglo-Saxon and Latin, to today's words influenced by the long Celtic tradition. I've used symbols that have religious and secular meanings and made drawings that pinpoint my locality, like many medieval manuscripts made reference to their place.

As I began making, the triptych took on a life of its own. Each element has a significance for me which can be pinpointed in time. One example is the calligraphic script I've used, which although influenced by historical scripts, was designed specifically for the contemporary hand-made *Saint John's Bible* in Minnesota, for which I was a scribe.

The structure allows for additions to be made and thus the triptych moved and changed infinitely. Its protective bag has space for extra pages because ultimately this work is intended to be useable and personalised by whoever it belongs to.

Susan Hufton

Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear

Sammy the Seal goes to the Library

Paper, board, leather, suede, seal fur, paste and PVA



As a bookbinder I am fascinated with the girdle book structure. I have found it a stimulating challenge to recreate and bind a re-imagined version of this ancient structure. A girdle book is essentially a portable item, a book small enough to tuck away on a belt. I like to imagine such books being used perhaps for books that are easy for even a child to carry. Today's version would perhaps be a book in a child's satchel. So this is why I have chosen a child's story for my content and why I have chosen the folded format of content to maintain a slim shape and elegance. The content has to fit within the limitations of something hung around the belt or in a bag. My illustrations have focused on a child's way of drawing by reference to the medieval documents. The manicules and flayholes leading the reader onto the back pocket and story. The pocket at the back of the book which houses the story helps to keep the child interested till the end with the last being the best. I have incorporated into the story some elements of history and medieval terminology – manicules, flayholes and the like. I have tried to keep the book as tactile as possible using suede, fur, leather and a smooth paper for the content. Many of today's bindings are based on developments of a traditional craft and this book is no exception – a contemporary version of a medieval form.

Sarah Jarrett-Kerr

Blagdon, Somerset

Enquire Within

Leather, Kindle Fire, foam board, elastic bands, brads, belt clip, stylus pen



I am fascinated by medieval girdle books, and actually saw one in Florence. I recently attended a course with Anna Yevtuck-Squire in Malvern where we made a replica. Based on the idea that these books were often called a *Silva Rerum*, forest of information, I have now conceived a modern take on this, rather than turning back the clock as I did for the Magna Carta project. My piece, the embossed title of which, “Enquire Within”, is based on the Victorian compendium *Enquire Within Upon Everything*, uses 21st century information technology in the form of a Kindle Fire, encased in a trendy purple and cerulean leather binding, with a stylus/biro doubling as the closure. An interpretation of something that was once commonplace in a modern form.

Almost all the materials used apart from the Kindle Fire came out my stash of things that might come in useful one day, and I thought it worth sacrificing the beautiful purple skin for this project. I have left its lovely raw edges at the top. I have had enormous pleasure designing and making this.

Jill Lauriston

Sheffield

A clog almanac

Outer structure: Uganda bark cloth, millboard, Stockwell drawing cartridge paper 130gsm, Gangolf Ulbricht paper 130gsm (50% cotton, 50% hemp)

Inner structure: 100 % New Zealand Harekeke (flax) paper, archival kraft 120 gsm, millboard

Images (5): Awagami ink jet paper, hemp cord, bone bead.

Wand: pine dowel 3mm diameter stained with printers' ink, carved smoked bone bead



Complex in design but rough-hewn in execution, the clog almanac stands out from the great majority of medieval manuscripts, artifacts and sculptures in that it was created and used by unlettered country folk, the people whose 'voices' are most often lost to us.

Originating in northern Europe as a long stick with tally marks and runes, it is thought to have come to northern England in early medieval times. Here its shape was altered over time from a meter long stick to a carved wooden cuboid, one-third the size of the original design, an improvement in its durability and ease of use.

The clog almanac tracks the passage of time over the four seasons of the year and across the nineteen year Metonic Cycle. Notches mark the days of the year and carved runes and symbols denote the lunar cycle and church holy days. It was "read" to determine when to plant, which saint's day to celebrate and when rent was due. As such, it was a prized resource for information, only replaced by printed almanacs in the 17th century.

One page is rolled into a scroll, fastened with a bone bead and set into one of the four 'cubicles' in the interior structure as pictured in the photo. The other four pages are unrolled for ease of display, if desired. The four pages depict images of seasonal scenes taken from the Luttrell Psalter. Each page has three images, depicting typical labours for the three months of a given season.

The concept and design of the clog almanac embody the mother wit and ingenuity of medieval country folk, bound to the land and their overlords and dependent on the seasons and weather. Artefacts such as these are my touchstone to feeling a kinship across the centuries with the people who used them.

I would like to thank graphic designer Makoto Yamada, who arranged and edited the images of medieval country life from the Luttrell Psalter that are depicted on the scrolls.

Candis Litsey

Seattle, USA

Stundenbuch

Letterpress with embossed linen-over-board cover, in slipcase



A remake of a book of hours (*Stundenbuch* in German) from the early 16th century – an attempt to bring the content of a 500 years old book into a modern contemporary artist's book form.

The inspiration was a vellum manuscript from the collection of the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel: the Book of Hours of Duke Augustus the Younger. Almost all texts of the prayer-book (written in an old form of the German language, related to Dutch and English) are used for this new book. Motifs of its painted miniatures were used for the design of the 81 picture pages of the book. The pictures were printed with polymer plates, the gildings are done with 22.5-carat gold leaf. Transcription of the manuscript texts by Peter Malutzki, who also did the design, handset and letterpress.

Peter Malutzki

Flörsheim, Germany

Caedmon's Storyboard

Wood, paper, ink, paint



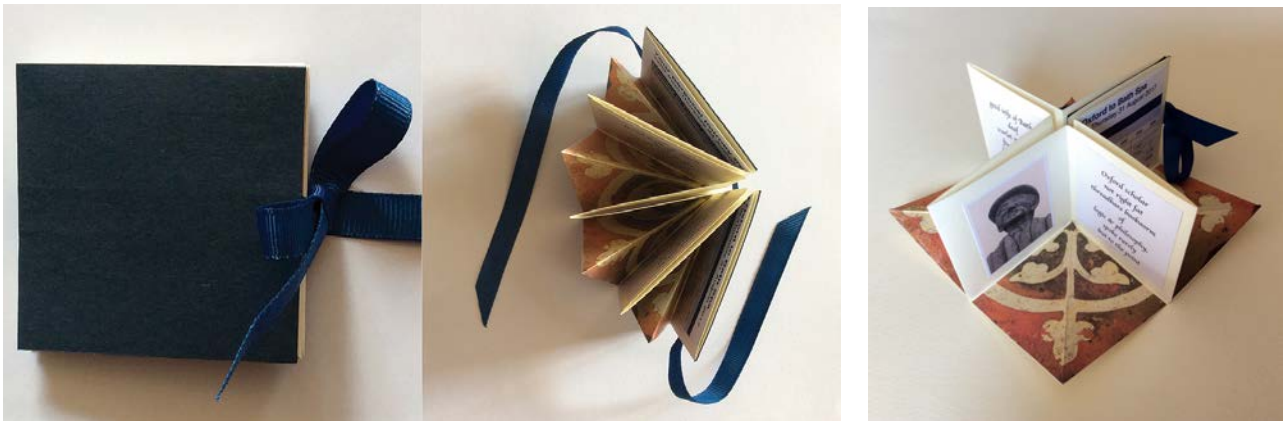
Caedmon's Hymn is the inspiration for my redesigning the medieval book project. After many months of preparation and research into this beautiful story and poem I decided to focus on the creation theme within the poem and Caedmon's role within it as part of the creation process and universe itself. I weighed many options and finally felt that space itself represents creation in the fullest possible manner. Throughout the story Caedmon becomes one with the universe as he sings his hymn and brings forth the ideology of creation. I wanted Caedmon to be one with the universe and I wanted to represent that through my art. The book itself encapsulates many aspects of motion and movement from spinning wheels to multiple sized booklets within the larger book. This represents the universe and allows the reader to explore Caedmon's story in unique and varied ways. The book itself is a puzzle that one must solve to reach the conclusion which is unique for each viewer. The book begins with the idea of song and the word *sing* itself as a manifestation of creation. The first thing we find is a pull tab with the word *sing*. Next we can open little booklets which emphasize what Caedmon sang. We can then explore the remainder of the book from illuminations to opening doors to enjoy and learn the meaning behind this wonderful story. The book ends with a tactile experience on the reverse side in the form of word images.

Jennifer L Mansfield

Arizona, USA

Pilgrim Passport

Digital print on paper, with card and ribbon



When these earliest and precious English books were demonstrated to us, it was a reminder that books come to life when the pages are turned. When displayed, only one double page can be seen at a time, like pinned out butterfly wings.

These books are the epitome of all the reasons why a library can never be digitalised – for reasons of access perhaps, but the physicality of the book is as important as the content.

As these modern responses are to go into the glass-fronted display cabinets, the folded medieval books inspired me to make a modern book where several of the pages could be seen at once, maintaining a simple codex format when closed but displaying the content when open on a shelf.

My book opens into four half-cube room-like areas. I used a medieval tile pattern for the ‘floor’ of the book, visually unifying the whole when open, and applying a medieval grounding.

The content then takes inspiration from *The Canterbury Tales* and Geoffrey Chaucer’s imaginary travellers, and my own journey to the Bodleian and the medieval world. It is a folded pocket timetable to and from the past, keeping information to hand for travel.

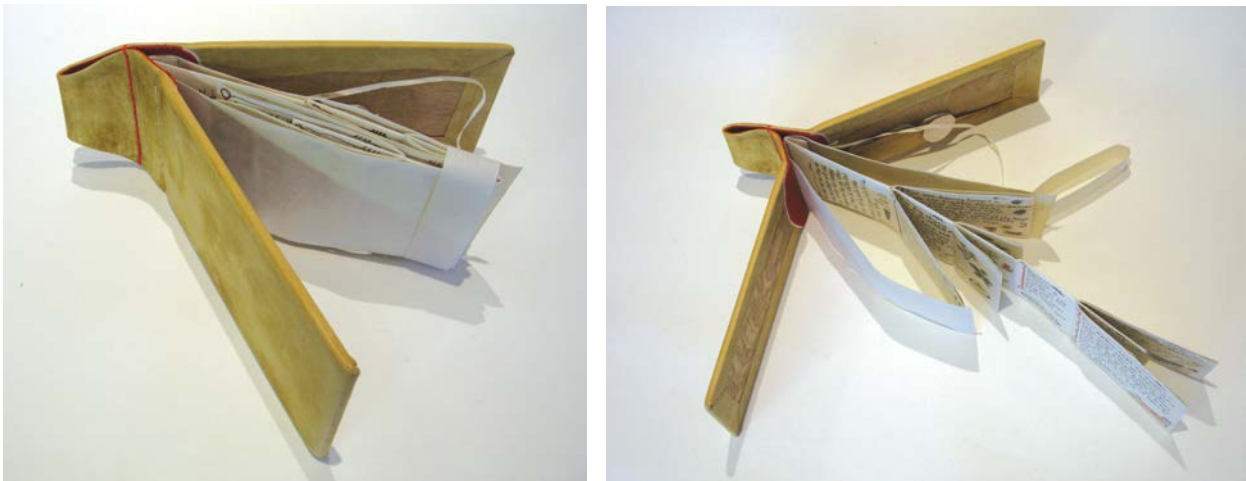
The journeying companions echo this, captured in petrified passport photographs with paired seventeen word descriptions.

Linda Parr

Devizes, Wiltshire

For That When You Are With Chylde

Folded and cut vellum bound in oak boards and calf



My submission is a girdle book. I like the idea of having the book you need to hand and I loved the one shown to us at the seminar. I hadn't appreciated how the text and structure of medieval books could be so 'designed', cut and folded to present information.

My idea was originally a 'designer baby' charm book, but it moved to being a 'self help' book for the trials and tribulations of pregnancy in the way there is so much literature available now. I saw there was an absence of text for women in a positive way, apart from wishes for a safe, swift delivery, of living child or still birth and decided I'd fill a bit of the gap with an imagined empowerment from perhaps a village, or peripatetic, midwife.

Working on the structure I played about with cutting and folding to create canvases for content and found I'd created a figure-like piece with both male and female attributes. It appealed to my idea of the medieval book as 'show and tell' in a very literal way.

I came across information on amulets and wanted to include some of these. Also included are some (more fanciful) charms for getting the child you want! The amulets are in a little pocket on the back board of the book – to be given to the woman.

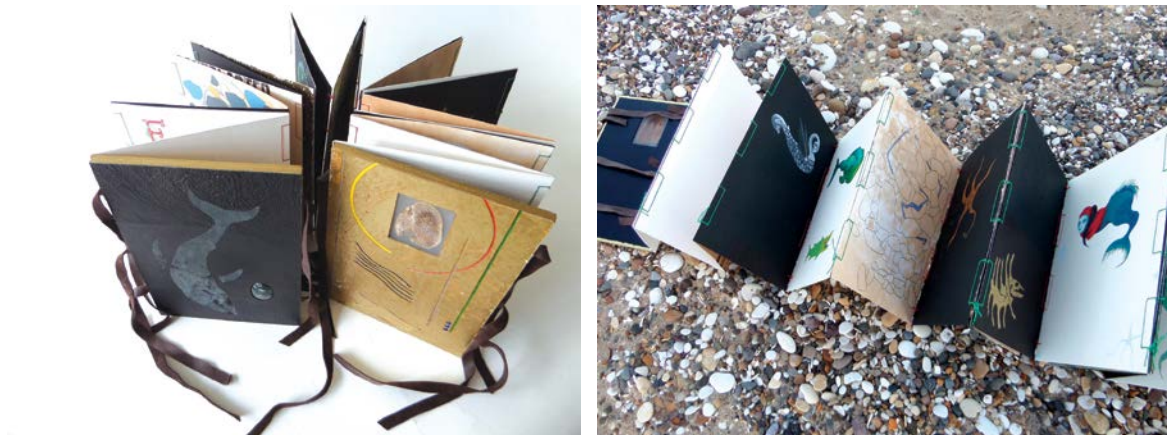
I imagined the book put together by the midwife herself and the red leather reinforcement is her personal choice.

Nesta Rendall Davies

Bridport, Dorset

Ocean Bestiary

Leather (inlay and cover ties), agate, velvet, gold foil, paper (Saunders, Canson and Fabriano), linen thread, acrylic paint, sand, graphite, printing inks (letterpress, lino and digital), carbon paper, tracing paper, grey board, lapis lazuli, sliced whale bone and resin



We were drawn to the competition brief not only because of our focus upon making artefact books, but also our interest in medieval manuscripts and art work. Our aim has been to push the boundaries of what we can make, by exploring ideas and challenging our skills and creativity to develop new work. Experimentation, structure and physicality underpin Ocean Bestiary and its contents are revealed gradually through the reader/viewer's repeated interaction.

Aims and interests:

- Designing and redesigning a double-sided concertina book, to create a continuous, sinuous structure functioning between and around two book covers (referencing medieval Almanac, late 1400s).
- Using bone (whale) and the concept of a reliquary.
- Taking time – connecting with medieval manuscripts, church wall paintings and artefacts – allowing the work to develop.
- Use and influence of colour, imagery and imagination – working with a medieval, limited palette to create our own collection of sea creatures.
- Considering images and text – which comes first? Which is the most influential?
- Creating interlinked, but also independently functioning, drawings and a poem.
- Where are stories to be found? Clues, ideas, information, stimulation in both pictures and words within the sequences and structure devised.
- Considering what the reader/viewer brings, adds and discovers.
- Exploring ways of showing and telling, in a process of repetition, re-working and alteration.
- Experimenting with techniques, problem-solving, using invention, imagination and storytelling.
- Using old ways of working and contemporary resources.
- Challenging ourselves to make a new, uncharted book within a limited timeframe.
- Taking time – reader/viewer negotiation - the book reveals itself.

SALT + SHAW (Paul Salt and Sue Shaw)

Sheffield

Pocket Madonna

Archival paper, brass, ribbon



I created the book *Pocket Madonna* from a handful of the many Madonna photographs I have taken over the years. Each image is of a Madonna I have gazed at – and loved – with my own eyes.

The *Pocket Madonna* is a modern manuscript which considers that the Madonna, The Virgin Mary, was a feminist. There are 17 Madonnas, each with handwritten imagined characteristics. The artist book can be folded up and put right in your pocket for easy reflection on beauty, history or religion. My book was inspired by the ingenious folds of MS Ashmole 8 from The Bodleian Library's design brief. It's so simple yet holds surprises for the reader.

I am a book artist who often works with objects, images and ephemera from the past. When I travel I'm always inspired by libraries, churches and collections of things, whether found in museums or flea markets.

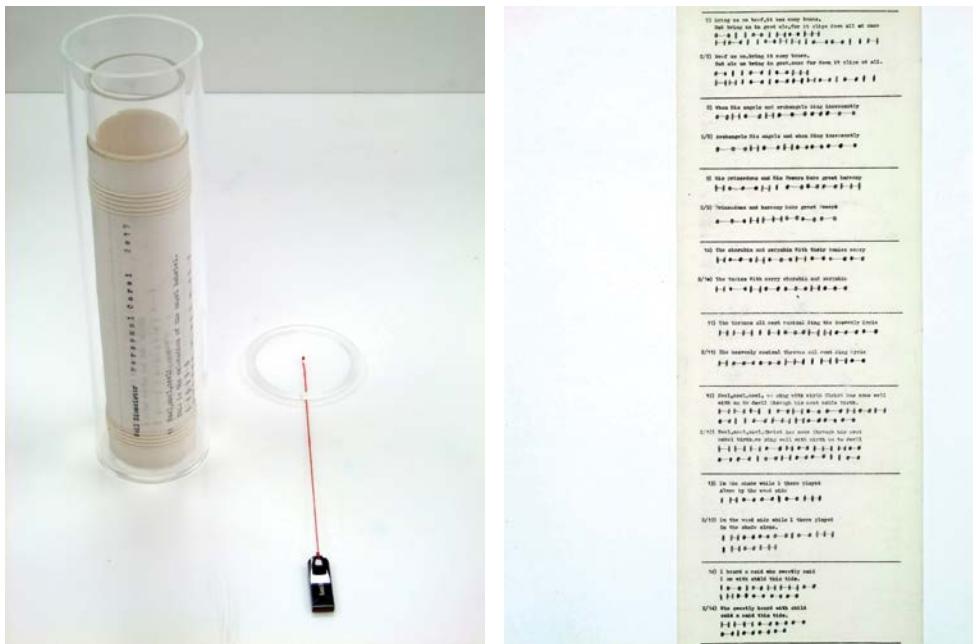
My work is held in several collections in the UK, including The Tate Britain, Winchester College UK, London College of Communication and Cardiff University, as well as many in the US, including UCLA, Emory, Baylor, Tufts, Savannah College of Art & Design and Bowdoin College.

Julie Shaw Lutts

Salem, Massachusetts, USA

Personal Choral

Paper, acrylic glass, USB stick



Personal Choral is the title of my work consisting of a paper roll on a transparent inner cylinder and an outer shell with a USB stick (video) on the cap of the transparent outer cylinder. I developed new forms of performance and a new form of a score inspired by the text and the structure of Christmas Choralling in the 1400s. In using the modern English text (verse 1-4) I create a new score which has been written and drawing in a notation for singing and breathing in a special structure and rhythm. In the breathing part each word has been translated: inhaling is marked as ovals, exhaling as circles. The word length is related to the length of the inhale and the exhale. The soloist is singing and the 'social group' is breathing the answer. I have found a form to perform the score by splitting myself. I created an own space-situation for making three different performances by myself, by using the score and by making three videos with a fixed camera. In a video-montage I overlapped the three video-productions. On the stick you can see this result in one video with the following effects: a. It seems like a mimetic suggestion that corresponds to the Christmas Choralling, b. The medieval sound converts into an a-tonal mesh and is an evidence for the artistic present. The role – as a metaphor and precursor of the book – is deliberately drafted as a recitative, recurring process in circular motion.

Emil Siemeister

Austria

Panacea

Digitally printed book, perfect binding, gloss full-colour cover, black and white printed 74gsm interior pages



I was particularly taken with the medical remedies and charms offered in the Medieval books, and immediately drew parallels with the remedies, charms and advice that is currently offered online. From a mix of authoritative and unqualified sources, or through chat rooms or comments sections, and spanning a broad mix of international contributors.

Using some of the same ailments described in the Medieval books, I looked for contemporary solutions offered on the Internet. In *Panacea*, each affliction is presented with the top three Google search solutions from one day in August 2017. Presented are the text from the top websites and images from the top three Google image searches, combinations from often unrelated sources. Some offer clear advice from supposedly reputable origins, others are much more questionable.

Presented in a book that references, and is the exact same size as, an iPhone 6S (or indeed most other smartphones). This is the modern day travelling 'book' that can be called upon in a time of need, privately if so desired.

Tom Sowden

Bristol

Observance

Digitally printed pamphlet booklet in water-tight phone pouch (made by Surf System)



My response to *Redesigning the Medieval Book* has drawn upon my continuing interest in the Book and its uses and making work about everyday hand-held objects.

Observance, the little pamphlet booklet, alludes in its title to both the act of careful observation and the following of tradition. Based on a Tide Table booklet that I use to access a tidal causeway to visit my sister who lives on Northey Island in Essex, the site of the Battle of Maldon in 991. This book is an essential guide to fit into any sailors or hikers pocket.

The text layer is influenced by the almanacs and notebooks collating both useful and not always so useful facts and information. The continuous text of keywords have been assembled from looking at the works of individuals and organisations, who over centuries, have observed and codified the natural world and the marine environment. The Venerable Bede (672-735) calculated that the High Tide was 47.5 minutes later each day, only 2.5 out by modern calculation.

My photographic images, taken over time of the Blackwater Estuary, attempt to capture the shifting tides, times of day, weather and activity on the water. A text layer sits over the images of related listings and chosen keywords rendered in bold.

The booklet is presented in a floating watertight phone pouch with clip, as homage to the Girdle Book and taking the place of the ubiquitous mobile phone.

Penny Stanford

Bromley, Kent

Susan Southcote herbal journal

Cotton embroidered cover, paper, gouache and gold leaf



I created this book to depict a medieval garden and a household compendium. It has biblical references recipes, folklore, a yearly plan of agricultural work, remedies that were popular at that time.

Little pockets contain recipes used in this particular household, which have been written out carefully. There is advice about certain herbs, what plants to avoid, how to use certain herbs. Every page there is something lovely to see. It has lift up flaps, and smells amazing.

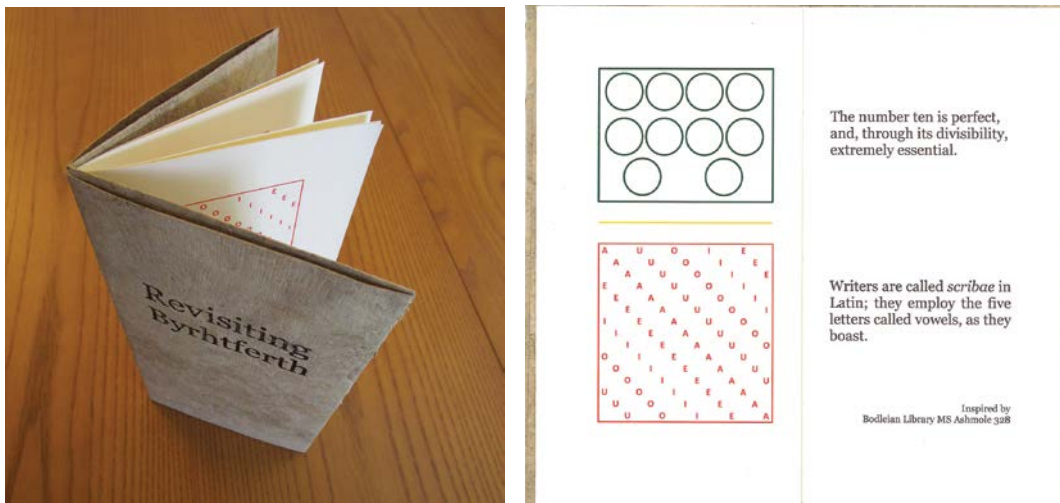
I would like to give a big thanks to Alma Swan, Jill Newton and Phillipa Newport for all their support and and massive help, and without whom this book what not have materialised.

Ruth Sutherland

Ashburton, Devon

Revisiting Byrhtferth

Amata Bark paper, title printed with Cranfield traditional relief ink, laser printed text



Revisiting Berhtferth, printed and bound in an edition of one, is a booklet inspired by the words and diagrams of Berhtferth of Ramsey as found in MS Ashmole 328. The touchstones are the diagrams on folios 229r and 163r and their accompanying texts, one in Latin and one in Old English. The booklet focuses on the perfection of the number 10, divisible, as Berhtferth tells us, as $5 + 5$, $3 + 7$, and $4 + 6$ (or $3 + 4 + 3$), which is expressed in the distribution of colours across the ten pages of diagrams. The number 5, given prominence by Berhtferth in his explanation of the divisibility of 10, is secondarily emphasised in the booklet by the inclusion of the square of vowels as one of the diagrammatic elements. Berhtferth tells us that medieval scribes boast of employing the five vowels, an ironic observation given that vowels are what carry the sound of spoken, as opposed to written, language. The palette is inspired by that of the manuscript's diagrams, executed in the a bright minium red, green, and ochre, as well as the main text's brown iron gall ink. The hand printing of the title, composed of words of 10 letters each, on rough paper provides a contrast to the mechanical precision of the laser printing inside.

Elizabeth C. Teviotdale

Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA

The Wise Woman's Girdle Book

Tree bark, Khadi paper, leather for pouch, linen thread and tape;
watercolour and pigmented ink



The asymmetry, irregularity and organic materials of medieval books always inspire my own contemporary aesthetic but a few things sprang out from the books shown to us – new variations of folded papers, the sewing up of holes in the vellum, the ‘veiling device’.

I immediately wanted to make a very female book to hang on a girdle, which would include cosmography and zodiac references, and alchemical, herbal and temporal devices and iconography, for lunar and menstrual cycles rather than the liturgical year.

I then later read about the Voynich manuscript in the *London Review of Books* and found that what I had started to imagine possibly already existed; with its coded text and intimations of women's affairs - the article hinted at possible ...*'heretical descriptions of female contraception or abortion...'* – unsurprisingly, someone in the 16th century had got there before me.

However I decided to proceed with my own version, and meet the Voynich manuscript head on.

I usually make woodcuts for my own books; the examples we were shown were not printed – so making a hand drawn book was exciting. I used Khadi hand-made paper from Nepal, which has a slightly waxy feel to it, and immediately introduced irregularities and an element of difficulty possibly also experienced by a medieval scribe on vellum.

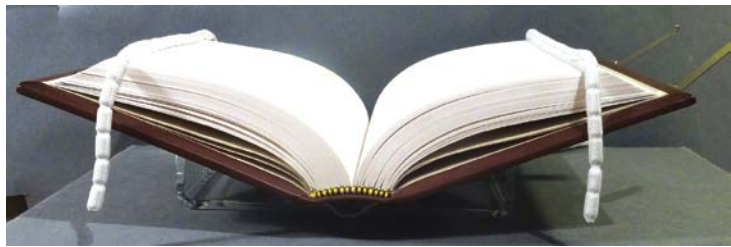
As the *London Review of Books* pointed out, '*...studying the (Voynich) manuscript in the hope of unlocking its secrets is to miss the point* ... there are ideas embedded in my book but the main idea is to enjoy playing with parallel worlds.

Carolyn Trant

Lewes, East Sussex

Recreation of MS46

Brown calf skin on quarter-sawn oak boards, blue and yellow silk thread headbands, linen sewing threads and cords, acro linen inner joints, parchment guards, acid free archive paper textblock, grey archive paper, brass and silver clasps



I tried to create this binding using traditional methods and materials that would have been used between the 14th and 17th centuries. Through this process of creation, I have arrived at a better understanding of collaboration between the different parties involved (e.g. patrons, scribes, paper makers, leather makers, binders, finishers, clasp makers). I also now have a better understanding of the relationships between materials, cost and techniques, and better appreciate books and preservation efforts over generations.

Makiko Tsunoda

Oxford

A Guide to Mouse Hunting

Wool, paper and ink



When I attended the medieval book workshop at the Bodleian I was fascinated to learn about the process that could turn an animal skin into a surface to write on and a material to bind a book with. We were told that the size of a medieval book was determined by the size of the animal the hide was taken from. I was consequently taken by the notion of what a book made from the hide of a really tiny animal, such as a mouse, would look like.

We learned that it is very important to keep medieval books dry as the slightest moisture can cause the vellum to swell and warp in an attempt to return to its former animal shape. On some of the books we examined we could still see traces of the animal hair, as it had not all been scraped away. It interested me that there remain these hints and memories of the deceased beast.

One of the medieval books that was shown was some kind of hunting guide, which would perhaps have been found in a nobleman's hunting lodge. This book provided descriptions and illustrations of the habits and appearance of some of the creatures a medieval hunter might hope to track and kill. Once I had decided to create a mouse-sized book it struck me that these days the closest most ordinary people get to hunting is pest control, so perhaps the modern equivalent to the hunting of wild boar or deer could be a guide to catching mice.

My book is the result of these initial thoughts. I have not tanned the hide of a real mouse but created the mouse-skin by needle-felting wool. Inside is sewn a maze book. I wanted to include decorative, illuminated capital letters, as these are to me such a key feature of medieval texts. These and the illustrations are hand-printed using blocks I have carved from rubber, much like a linocut. The text I have scribed by hand.

Lizzie Waterfield

Banbury, Oxfordshire

Remedie

Digitally printed fabric with hand embroidery; wool felt cover with braided hemp fastening



The main strands of my practice as a book artist are illustrating collections inspired by the natural world and documenting advice from bygone eras. So I was drawn to the idea of creating a book of plant-based remedies – healing words – from medieval times.

I was inspired by a discussion in the workshop about the prestige of book ownership – that the time and expense of commissioning an illustrated book made the final product into a status symbol. Ordinarily, I tend to create digitally printed books in small multiples, but I saw this brief as an opportunity to create a one-off, handmade artefact with an unrushed, methodical production process.

Interested in addressing the challenges of medieval craftspeople in designing a book, and influenced by their love of ornamentation, I decided to hand embroider my illustrations. In addition to developing new skills of embroidery, braiding and working with fabric, I chose natural materials such as cotton, wool felt and hemp cord which were conceivably available in centuries past. My nods to the 21st century were the digitising of the Carolingian Miniscule alphabet to create a typeface for the text, and digitally printing this and my original hand-drawn illustrations onto fabric. All other aspects of the book were created by hand.

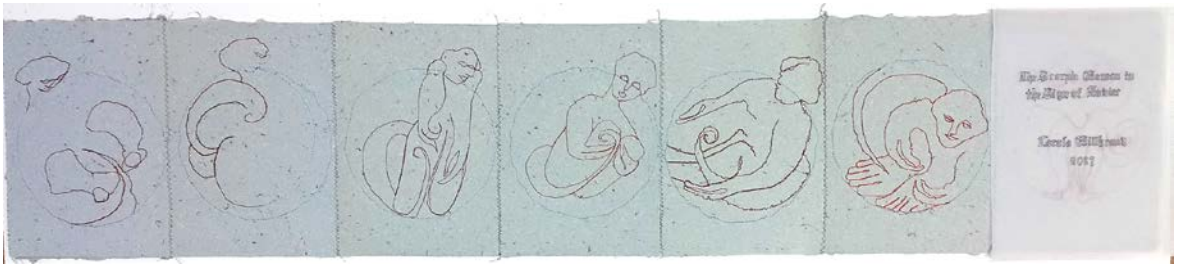
The size of the book was chosen for portability, the codex format to conceal the back of the embroidery, and the practical, hardwearing cover ensures longevity for the content. I hope to have created a book that will withstand the test of time.

Corinne Welch

Bristol

The Scorpio Woman in the Sign of Zodiac

Handmade paper (made from my worn clothing) drawings sewn with a sewing machine, sewn together as a leporello fold, translucent paper cover, hand drawn text



I created *The Scorpio-Woman in the Sign of Zodiac* in relation to the illustration of John Somer's *Kalendarium 1440* (page 45 of the mood board sent by the Bodleian Library) as an historical medical illustration (of bloodletting). This medical science in the ancient and in the medieval world was based on astrology. The human body was influenced by the zodiac. The illustration of the zodiac man subclassified the parts of the human body in connection to the zodiac.

Moving in 2016 from the city Cologne to the countryside I rediscovered the starry sky. I realised that my personal zodiac 'scorpio' can only be seen in the summer from the northern hemisphere. So I show myself, my body under the zodiac scorpio in one year. I made my own paper out of my own clothes because in our cultural history we made paper out of rags. I used a sewing machine to create my illustrations, because I have two images based on the upper thread and the lower thread - working with thread, sewing is a basic of human culture. I used Textura font, because these gothic letters are the beginning of modern lettering. The translucent paper is cover and caption (the iconography for the 'scorpio-woman'). I found it in a closed down printing press. I fold the 'zodiac-woman' as a leporello – used in the medieval books as in the artist's-books today like me.

Because of the upper and the lower thread I have not only one image for one month in one year but double – a circulation of one year in 12 month round-trip – the thread metaphor of life like ancient Ariadne.

Carola Willbrand

Germany

Self: Bound

Goat leather with parchment effect paper pages, silver plated chain and findings.
Calligraphy inks, acrylic paints, lapis lazuli, and shell gold pigments



Inspired by the medieval girdle book almanac I imagined it in miniature, making it wearable as jewellery and talisman and making the contents more intimate and personal while still remaining a medical and reference tool. My personal experiences with chronic pain influenced the content.

It is an aid for the self as well as useful when dealing with health professionals. In keeping with the accessible nature of the object I have chosen relatively affordable but durable materials, with the odd touch of luxury, and decorated it in a way that does not detract from its usefulness.

The pages include charts reminiscent of the original but focus on information of use to the imagined owner. It opens with the past: basic medical information, diagnoses, and a pain scale, useful for tracking health and mood as part of pain management. The second half of the text is about the future: exercises for rebuilding core strength tailored to suit the individual, and dates to remember both useful and frivolous.

Tying them together in the centre is a painted body, useful for physiotherapy/pain tracking but also decorated with oak leaves as a reminder of strength and endurance. The body sits rather than folds, extending outwards to embrace life. The two hearts remind the owner to look after their physical and their mental well being.

Linette Withers

Leeds

Manuscript of two versions of *The Wife's Lament*

Aluminum cover; fine wool pages, Irish linen, micron pens, metallic fabric dyes, silk and linen embroidery threads, viscose ribbon, glass beads, copper and silver fastenings



A reproduction of the 10th century Old English original text of *The Wife's Lament* bound in *The Exeter Book*, Exeter Library MS 3501, which I have bound together with Mr Richard Hamer's verse translation as published in 1970 in *A Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse*.

My book is inspired by the patina of extant manuscripts' time-worn pigskin covers and vellum pages.

I have used aluminium and fine wool that I have dyed to echo the 'aged' appearance of manuscripts that have survived from the Middle Ages.

The beautiful shapes of the letterforms of Anglo-Saxon script I have written on handloom woven Irish linen, which I edged with gold to echo the gold edging so prevalent on medieval manuscripts.

I chose *The Wife's Lament* because it has a message as relevant today as when it was written more than a 1,000 years ago: hopes, fears, abandonment, love, fidelity.

I have added illustrations embroidered in silk and metal threads: the oak trees, high hills, and the 'earth cave' mentioned in the text. I stitched birds to represent the narrator's emotions, hopes and flights-of-fancy.

I chose Richard Hamer's translation because it conveys with emotion the essence of the text in a lyrical form. With a finger swipe across a 21st century screen, the scholarly controversy of interpretation of this text is readily available. My aim was to offer an unusual presentation to invite investigation!

I soldered copper and silver together to fasten this book of two scripts and two languages.

The intention of my book is to present a visual experience that is far removed from a 21st century swipe screen.

Gilly Wraight
Hampshire

Redesigning The Medieval Book

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