Artists’ Books and Fine Press Books
Instruction

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http://libguides.sjsu.edu/specialcollections/artistbooks
Artists’ Books and Fine Press Books

An artist’s book is _______________________________________________________.

A fine press book is _______________________________________________________.

The two are ______________________ but their features can indeed ____________________.

Some examples of artists’ and fine press books in our Special Collections:

1. *Cartographical Incantations*, Casey Gardner
2. *Direction of the Road*, Ursula Le Guin
3. *Fatherland*, Shu-ju Wang
4. *Golden Gate Treasure*, Marvin R. Hiemstra
5. *Just Because I’m Blonde*, Suzanne Thomas
6. *Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland; Through the Looking Glass: Arranged as a Peep-Show*, Maryline Poole Adams
8. *Manuscript* (Scripps College Press)
9. *Memento*, Julie Chen
10. *Moving On*, Elena Mary Siff
13. *Panorama*, Julie Chen
14. *Restless Dust*, Gail Wight
15. *Undersea*, Rachel Carson
Searching on the Catalog

Our library catalog:
http://catalog.sjlibrary.org/search/

If you are new to artists’ and fine press books, I recommend starting your search with the subject heading Artists’ books. From here, you can discover more subdivisions based on time period, location, or topic. It’s important to note that the subdivision Specimens refers to examples of artists’ books. Notice these two catalog records below and the details and information (or lack thereof) we can gather from reading the records:

- Memento (2012) by Julie Chen

Our catalog uses the subject heading Fine books for fine press titles. However, only a small handful are actually cataloged under this subject heading. A helpful tip is to do a keyword search on the name of a press or your favorite author or book title, and then limit the search to Special Collections. Read through the catalog records of the two titles below and notice the similarities and differences:

- My First Summer in the Sierra (1988) by John Muir (Yolla Bolly Press)
- Crazy Quilt (1998) by Maureen Cummins

It is a challenge to find these titles; however it’s easy to learn helpful tips and tricks (more on the libguide!). This is important because the catalog is the main access point to discover the available titles in our collection.
Remember…

1. Artists’ books and fine press books are different, but their features can overlap, as they come in all shapes and formats
   a. An artist’s book can be printed at a fine press, and a fine press book can be considered an artist’s book

2. These books may not be as easily accessible as those in our stacks, but they still are easily accessible via the CATALOG (the main access point)
   a. Through the catalog we can distinguish what is an artist’s book and what is a book about artists’ books

3. Artists’ books are easily distinguished in our catalog, but finding fine press books may require a bit more searching power
Resources Beyond SJSU

SJSU Special Collections offers many artists’ and fine press books, but there are many resources outside of SJSU that represent a wider variety of what has been and is being made in the world of book and paper arts. Here are a few of my favorite resources:

- **Bay Area Book Artists**
  
  [www.bayareabookartists.org/](http://www.bayareabookartists.org/)

  BABA has a great gallery of artists’ books created by a variety of Bay Area book artists. There is also a list of links and other resources that will help you get started on learning more about book arts. This organization also hosts events related to book arts in the area.

- **San Francisco Center for the Book**
  
  [www.sfcb.org](http://www.sfcb.org)

  At this website, you can learn more about SFCB’s exhibitions (past and present) and thereby learn about more book artists and their works. The SFCB also hosts many workshops related to printing, bookbinding, book arts, etc.

There are more resources listed on the libguide that not only focus on book arts in the Bay Area but cover a variety of topics on book arts on a global scale.
“In the hands of an artist, a book’s full potential is realized. It’s transformed into something more than just a container for information. It becomes an experiential medium for creative expression.”

Julie Chen, 500 Handmade Books
Colophon

This booklet was printed on a regular ol’ HP printer on Hammermill letter-sized paper, in Perpetua typeface. Each copy’s pages were folded in half and bound with various types of thread/string. Some illustrations and markings were done by hand by the “artist.” 😊

This is copy number 13 (digital copy) of an edition of 13 copies.

Thank you!