



Art of the Book

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Lesson Plans for Educators

October 11, 2000

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I would like to extend my thanks to Anna Campbell Bliss, Sas Colby and Sue Cotter for their generosity in sharing with us their thoughts on art and the creation of the books highlighted in this Evening for Educators. I would also like to thank Gladys Muren, art historian, for her wonderful research and compilation of information on our three artists and to teachers, Mary Wells and Tami Searle for their exciting lesson plans. Without the cooperation of people like this my task would be impossible. - Bernadette Brown, Coordinator for Evening for Educators, 2000

Evening for Educators is funded in part by the StateWide Art Partnership and the Lawrence T. and Janet T. Dee Foundation and the William Randolph Hearst Fund for Education Programs



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Image List

1. Anna Campbell Bliss (b. 1946) American
Labyrinths of the Mind, 1998
Mixed media painting, screen printing, digital printing. Covers, Baltic plywood.
Purchased with Funds from the Enid Cosgriff Endowment for Utah Artists
1999.39.1

2. Sas Colby (b. 1939) American
Life Book: 1939-1976, 1979
Photocopy, cloth (woven material unknown), paper
Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum
1980.050

3. Sue Cotter, American
Fossil Ridge, 1988
Paper, cord, pigment
Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum
1992.026.003

Labyrinths of the Mind

Anna Campbell Bliss



Anna Campbell Bliss (b. 1946) American
Labyrinths of the Mind, 1998
Mixed media painting, screen printing, digital printing. Covers, Baltic plywood
Purchased with Funds from the Enid Cosgriff Endowment for Utah Artists
1999.39.1

Written by Gladys Muren

As a child, Anna Campbell Bliss demonstrated artistic talents, especially for color and its harmonious arrangement. However, even as a child, Bliss had no interest in realism. She gravitated towards science and loved mathematics because of the beauty of proportion and space, the same elements of art. Bliss received a Bachelor of Art in Art History from Wellesley College. The artist was attracted to architecture because it combined both art and mathematics, and received a Masters of Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Bliss has had a long-time interest in using the computer to make algorithmic art (rule-based art made with the aid of a computer).

She now resides in Salt Lake City and has participated in numerous solo and group shows throughout the country. She has lectured and published extensively and has participated in workshops. In 1993 Bliss created "Light of Grace," a 40 x 40 foot stained cast glass wall for St. Thomas More Catholic Church, Sandy, Utah.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

"Art is a way of exploring the visual world, of mining personal resources, or creating one's own reality. Boundaries are artificial. Often the most exciting ideas emerge at the intersection where more than one discipline meets."

ABOUT THE BOOK – Description:

Colophon:

A Japanese fold book designed and printed by the artist.

Mixed media painting, screen printing, digital printing

Covers – Baltic plywood

Paper – 140# Arches hot pressed watercolor

Type – Garamond

Double/page side: 11' x 17' color coded

Pagination including fly leaves: 16 unnumbered

Text and photographs by the artist and the following:

- Susan Sontag from “In Praise of Shadows” by Tanizaki
- Balthazar Korab photo of Hamilton Garden, designed by Dan Kiley, Anna Campbell Bliss, consultant
- Navy photo of atom bomb explosion
- Scott Peterson photos of RDT dancers
- R. Buckminster Fuller
- Ruth Asawa
- Santiago Calatrava
- Josef Albers
- Codex Huygens after Leonardo, American Academy Library, Alinari photo;
- Brian scans courtesy of a friend

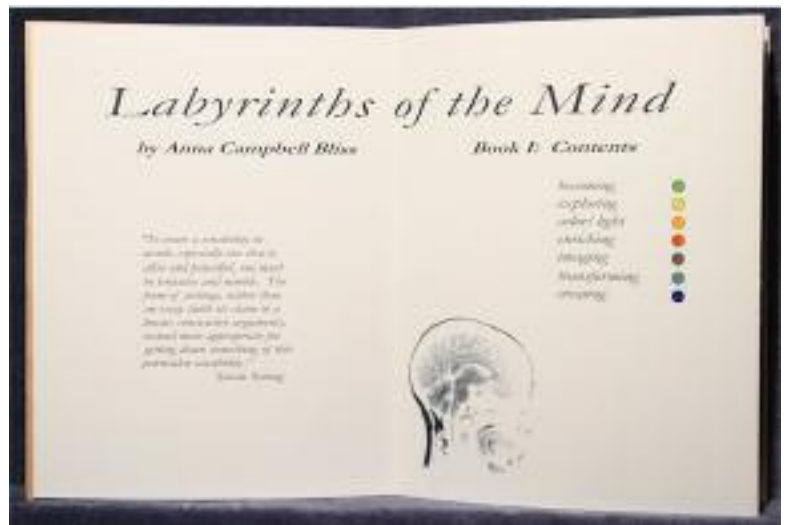
Background:

Knowing her interest in the Book Arts, Madelyn Garrett, Curator, Rare Books Division, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, challenged Bliss to do a book for the competition and exhibition, *Westward Bound*. Garrett mentored the process showing Bliss many examples from the University of Utah Rare Book Collection. This was a new medium for the already versatile Bliss who attended lectures by book artists and a workshop on the topic of book art. *Labyrinths of the Mind* resulted from that challenge. “I was surprised and pleased,” expressed Bliss, “to have my first book accepted. Concepts of mind and recent brain research inspired exploration of my own experience.”

Particularly interesting to Bliss are the visual, verbal, and tactile references that trigger memory. The book begins with a personal quote:

“I often think of the mind as a luxuriant garden, cultivated for a lifetime. From early childhood it has been a place of comfort and shelter. But, the world has a way of encroaching, threatening my refuge and inspiration. In my dreams it becomes a labyrinth from which I struggle anxiously to emerge.”

According to the artist, “The introduction by Susan Sontag (below) is the best explanation of what I was trying to do and type of book that was created. The page titles also provide clues to the content which is more abstract and visual than a typical biographical account. My interest was conveying ideas by visual means with the minimum of text.”



“To snare a sensibility in work, especially one that is alive and powerful, one must be tentative and nimble. The form of jottings, rather than an essay (with its claim to a linear, consecutive argument), seemed more appropriate for getting down something of this particular sensibility.” -Susan Sontag

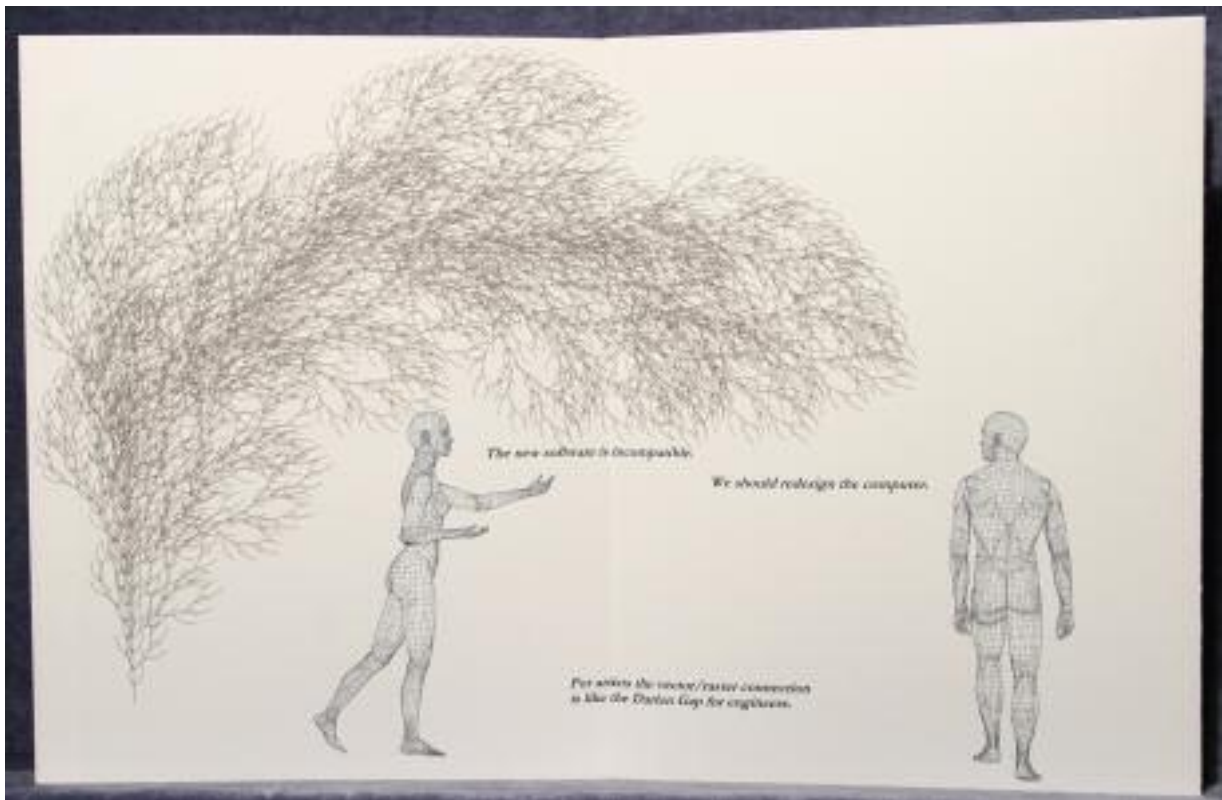
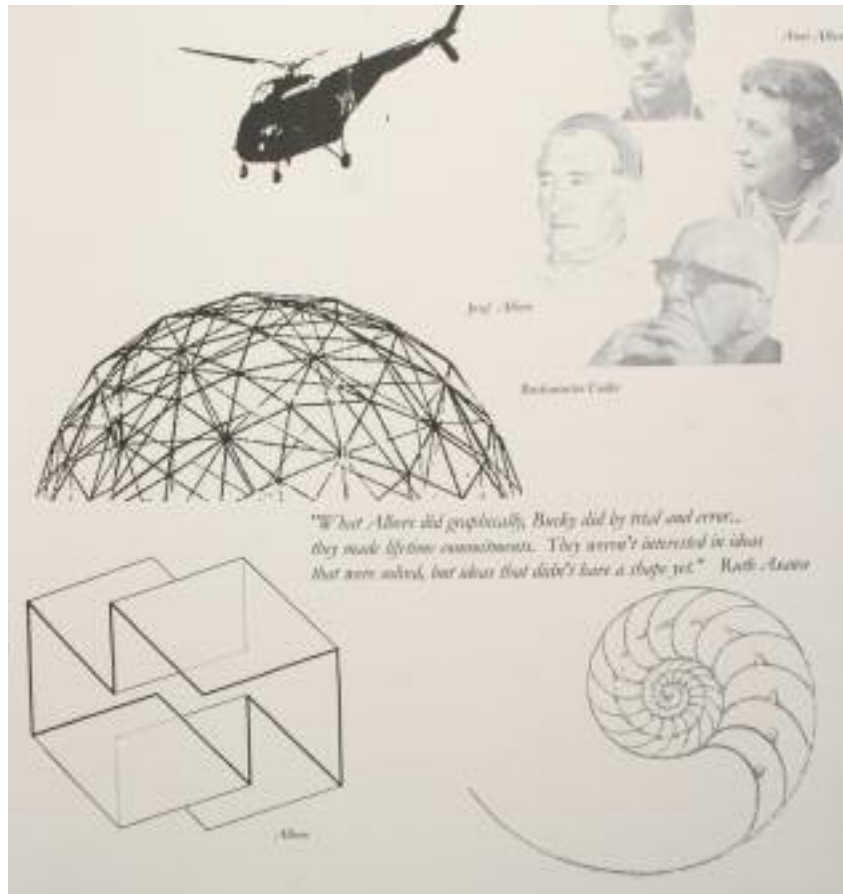
Labyrinths include the following sections:

- 1) Becoming: Reflects the emergence from the security of childhood into the adult world.
- 2) Exploring: Introduces the many sources of intellectual and visual inspiration that have influenced the artist's life. The color photos record her interest in archeology and the physical exportation of Peru, Bolivia and Southern Utah.
- 3) Color/light: Included as the focus of the artist's art and research and also for contrast with digital printing which has less color saturation and lack tactile qualities (each page is an original hand and screened work).
- 4) Enriching: records Bliss's fellowship in Rome and came at a very critical time in her life. She looks upon that city as her spiritual homes.
- 5) Imaging: Refers to the artist's long experimentation and “frequent frustration” with the computer as an artistic tool.
- 6) Creating: Introduces her own photography in a constructed image to convey the way that ideas take off and create their own demands, very true in art.
*In the revised edition: The birds were screened in the three stages to create more movement.
- 7) Transforming was added to reflect some of Bliss' programming interests. It is based on the Truchet tile algorithm.
- 8) The book concludes with: “Idea, Process, Experience = Art.”

Resources:

“The Art of Bliss,” Deseret News article by Dave Gagon, visual arts writer, 1999.
Written correspondence between the artist and Gladys Muren, August 2000.
Resume in the files of the Utah Museum of Fine Arts.





Labyrinths of the Mind

“What is a Book?” Lesson

written by Mary Wells

Objective: The students will create an accordion fold book that communicates feelings.

Grade Levels: Grade 1-6

Time Frame: 3 forty-five minute sessions

Links to Core:

- 1) Use value, color and texture to create interest
- 2) Create and invent symbols to represent ideas, moods or thoughts in art work.
- 3) Handle art materials in a safe and responsible way.

Questions for looking:

- What is this artwork? What is a book? Books are old and come in many forms like clay tablets, scrolls, oriental folds, and western codex. Describing what a book is is not simple. About the only thing a book absolutely has to have is a group of pages that can be arranged and held together in a certain order. The pages can be any size, shape, number, and made of any material.
- What is the title of this work? What is a labyrinth? (An intricate structure or enclosure containing a series of winding passages hard to follow without losing one's way; a maze.) What do labyrinths and books have in common?



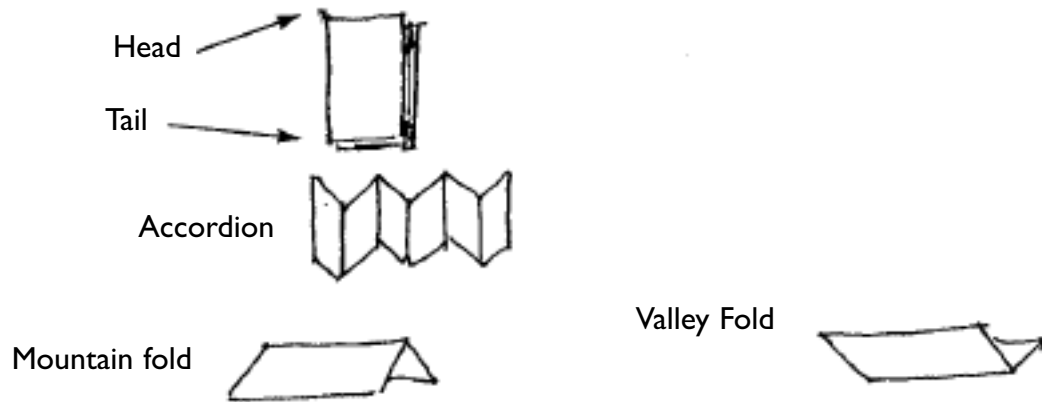
- From what materials is this book made? Why do you think the cover is so plain? (see image at the left). Is this a sculpture? How big is this piece? Do you think it would be easy to hold? How has the artist used color, line, texture, value, shape, pattern, and repetition?
- What is the purpose of this book? What do you like about it? What would you do differently? Do we need books if we have television and computers? Why or why not?

- Do you think you can make a book? What makes this a good book?
- Would you like to own this book? Do you think you would like this book a month from now? Is this book better than other styles of books? Ms. Bliss' book is a Japanese accordion style folded book. She used mixed media to create the sixteen pages. The style Ms. Bliss used is very old. The content is personal and experimental. She has used original quotes as well as borrowed ones. The photographs communicate the feelings she wishes to share with us.

Key Words/Vocabulary:

- Accordion
- Head
- Mountain Fold
- Tail

- Colophon; a statement at the end of a book that answers the reason the book was made, how the illustrations were made, how the text was put in the book and what kind of paper was used.
- Valley Fold



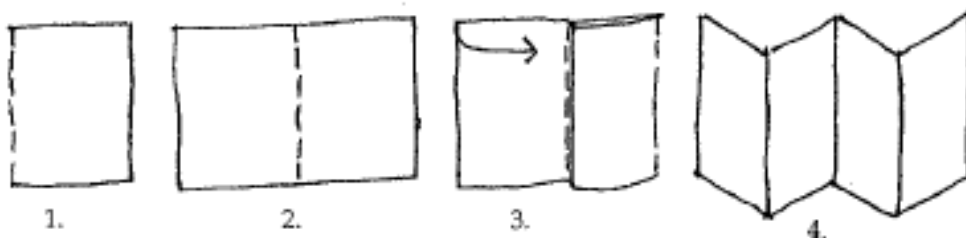
Lesson Activities

Instructional Materials Needed:

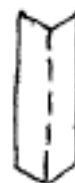
Cardstock or poster board 4" x 4 1/2", 2 pieces
 2 white drawing paper 12' x 18'
 Watercolors, crayons, colored pencils
 Glue sticks

Directions:

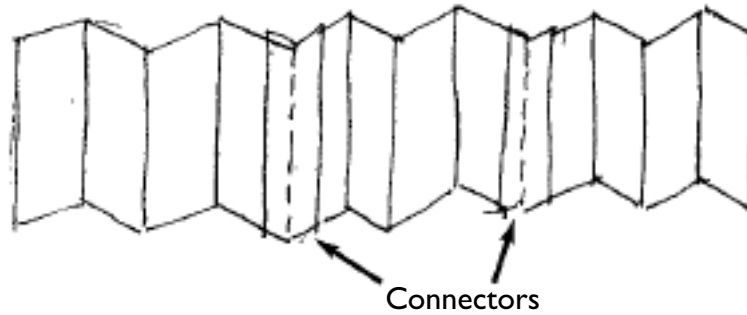
- 1) Using the white drawing paper, freely paint, draw and/or color both sides of the paper. This would be an opportunity for the students to respond to a discussion of the elements and principles of art or to teach some watercolor techniques.
- 2) When the paper is dry, cut the paper into strips 4" x 18". Each child should have 6 strips.
- 3) Cut one strip into smaller strips, 2" x 4" to be used as connectors.
- 4) Fold the remaining 5 strips into 4 equal sections by folding the strip in half, crease, and unfold. Then, fold the ends to the middle, crease. Refold so it makes an accordion.



- 5) Do this to all 5 strips 4" x 18". Fold all the 2" x 4" strips in half lengthwise.



- 6) Coat the valley fold side of the connector strips with glue, and then attach it to two the 4" x 18" strips. Continue with this procedure until all strips are connected.



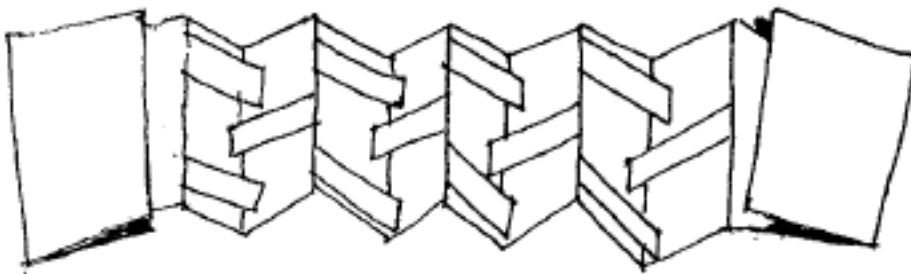
- 7) Attach the covers to the two end sections by covering the last section of the pages with glue and placing the cover on top. Refold if necessary to have the accordion fold alternate correctly.
 8) Decorate the covers.
 9) Direct students to copy a poem or write an original one that is about feelings. Use a ball point pen or gel pen if they are available.
 10) Have students give their book a title.

Assessment:

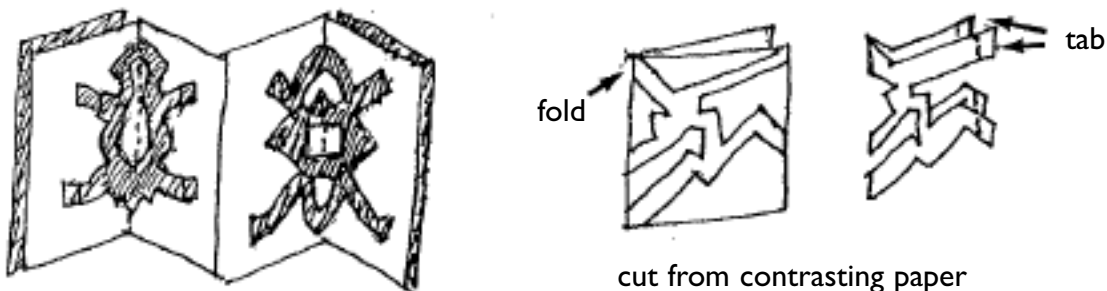
- 1) Observe and note the student's participation in the discussion.
- 2) Observe the student's use of production time.
- 3) Assess the relationship or harmony of the title to the book.

Extension Connections to Other Areas of the Curriculum: The finished book can be used in others subject areas to create illustrated information books or for reports. Following are some suggested activities that use the basic accordion fold book.

Winged Accordion Book

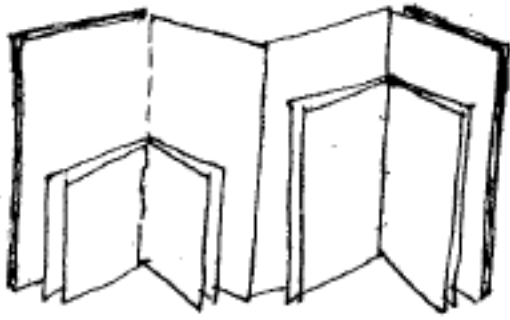


Accordion with Pop Out Attachments

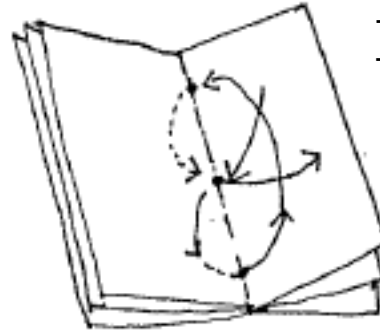


Attach a hard cover to front and back.

Accordion with Three-hole Pamphlet



Attach a hard cover to front and back.



Tie in a square knot.
Trim ends.

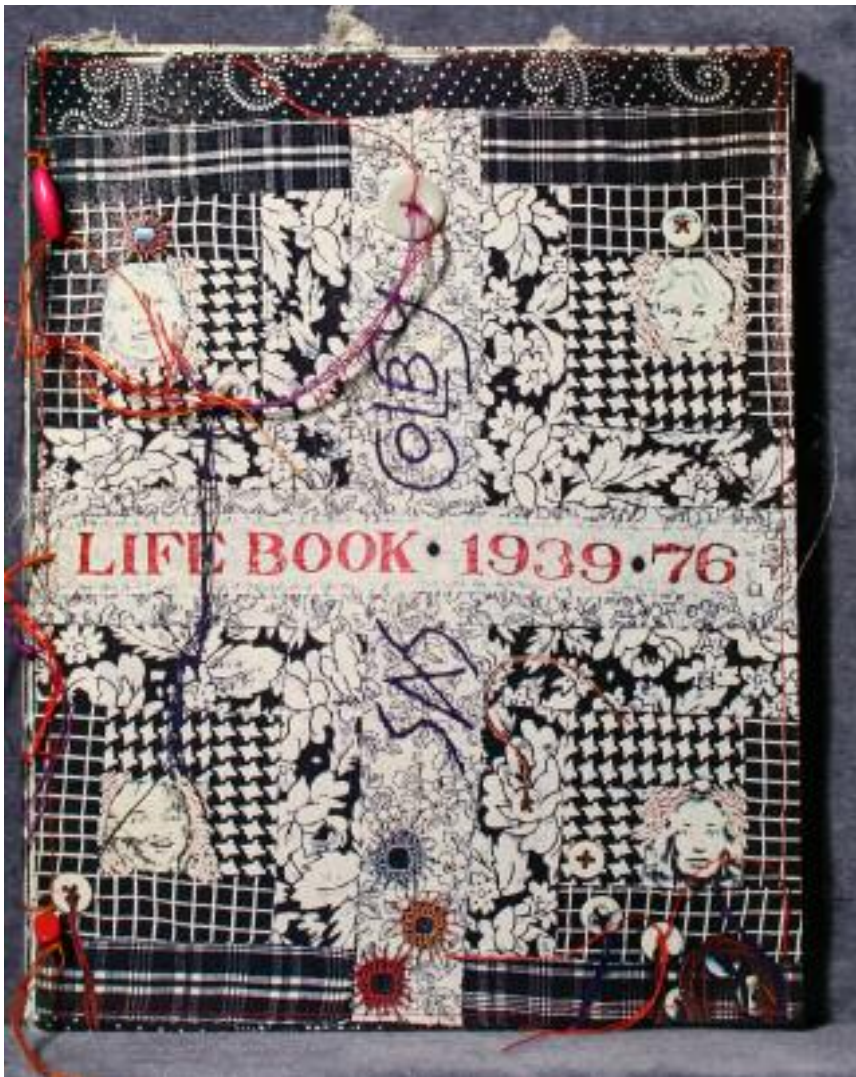
“The book is the summation of all art. There is sculpture and architecture in the binding, dance in the structure, music in the sequence of pages, visual art in the illustration, literature in the text and drama in the collaboration of skills required to produce it.”

-Peter and Donna Thomas

“Many have experienced the making of a book as a satisfying and artistic, and indeed a healing experience.”
(Taken from the catalog of the exhibit THE NURTURED SPIRIT. SLC, 1997)

Life Book: 1939-1976

Sas Colby



Written by Gladys Muren

Sas Colby, a mixed media artist, has been teaching and exhibiting art for thirty years. Colby's works include such diverse mediums as textiles, photography, painting, drawing, collage and assemblage, and materials such as glass, buttons, beads, and an array of found objects. She is known for her work in the genre of artists' books, experimental works which push the boundaries of books as we know them. Colby has taught the medium here and abroad and is considered a pioneer in the field. Colby studied at Rhode Island School of Design in Providence from 1957-1959. Her artwork is in the collection of the Australian National Gallery, Canberra; the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris; Swedish Archive of Artists' Books, Malmo, Sweden; the Oakland Museum, and numerous private and public collections. In 1995 her survey show, *Twenty Years of Book Thinking*, traveled to three venues in this country. Recently, she was a featured speaker at the Smithsonian Institution and at the Colorado Art Educator's Conference. The artist is painting now, but says, "Every once in a while I make a book because I can't help myself."

Artist's Statement:

"My artwork evolves from a fascination with the medium, whether it be canvas, cardboard or cloth I follow my obsessions closely: drawing, stitching, painting, collecting, arranging, listening and reading. The process involves placing elements in relation to one another, responding to the sound of a word or the force of a color or the feel of a material. Sometimes my movements are large and sweeping as in a drawing that occurs on the wall. Other times they are tiny and controlled, as when I am altering a found book and entering another's visual plane."

Sas Colby (b. 1939) American
Life Book: 1939-1976, 1979
Photocopy, cloth (woven material unknown), paper
Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum
1980.050



ABOUT THE BOOK – Description:

Colophon:

Life Book is a 12 page, one-of-a-kind fabric book with Xerox photo transfers embellished with machine and hand stitching. It is an autobiographical pictorial account of my life told through photographs transferred to the fabric medium. This is #9 of 10 facsimiles printed in Berkeley, California on October 9, 1979. The book is signed by the artist. (The artist was named Sandra Colby; however, her younger sister couldn't say her name, calling her "Sassy" instead. "Sas" stuck which Colby says has worked well for her as an artist).

The UMFA edition is a same-size color Xerox of the original fabric book. The artist was impressed with how the copy process duplicated the threads of the fabric, but "missed" the flexibility of the cloth book. The pages of the Xerox copies were hand sewn together thereby giving "life," according to the artist, to the Xerox copies. The Xeroxed copy also includes buttons and wooden beads attached with embroidery glass to the cover.

Background:

The artist, then recently divorced, was prompted to create the "fabric, photographic autobiography" when she saw a photograph for her husband and his new wife. Behind a zipper on one of the pages is the artist's photograph, she is going down in flames. Colby states that making the book was a cathartic experience.

Other books by Sas Colby include:

Bonnard Meets Bunny, 1999, Altered book, 6.75" x 10.5"

Books of Uncommon Prayer, 1996, Altered books, each 4.5" x 3"

Gauze, 1979, edition 2 of 5 is in the UMFA collection

Repairs, 1995, One of a kind book; gesso, pencil, shellac on paper with textile and stitching, 13' x 11' x 1.5'

Books to Read and Write, 1992, One of a kind book; acrylic on canvas, 16' x 42'

Untitled, 1992, One of a kind book, acrylic on canvas, 18" x 38"



Life Book: 1939-1976

“Creating a Lifebook” Lesson

written by Mary Wells

Objectives: Create a “LIFE BOOK” that tells the student’s story using pictures and limited amount of words.

Grade Levels: Grades 2 – 6

Time Frame: 4 forty-five minute sessions

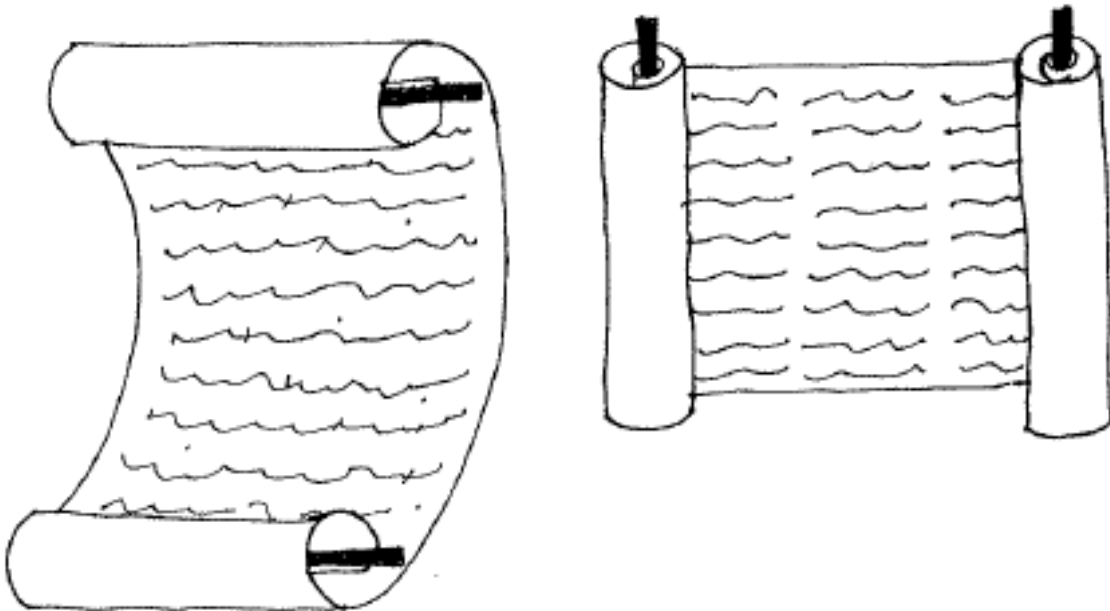
Links to Core:

- 1) Include new or novel art materials in the creation of artworks.
- 2) Make simple patterns by repeating dots, lines, shapes and colors.
- 3) Handle art materials in a safe and responsible way.
- 4) Respect other students’ artworks as well as one’s own.

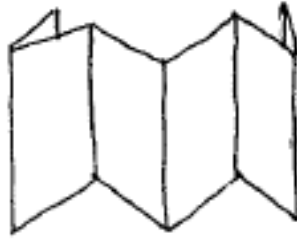
A BRIEF AND INCOMPLETE HISTORY OF BOOKS

The invention of writing made possible the beginning of the book. About 3500 B.C.E., the ancient Sumerians developed symbols called cuneiform, where symbols were wedge-shaped and incised with a stylus, on damp clay, and dried. In addition to the clay tablets that were being produced, many inscriptions and records were being engraved on stone.

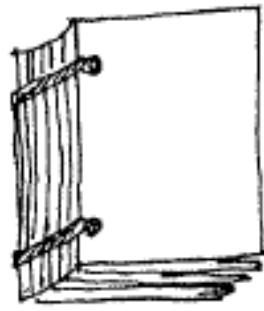
About 2500 B.C.E. the Egyptians invented a method of making sheets of papyrus. These sheets came from the stem of the papyrus plant, were about 12” by 16”, pasted into long rolls with a wooden stick attached to each end, providing a roller. They used pens made from reeds for writing.



Paper was invented by the Chinese about the second century B.C.E. and was introduced in Europe about the Tenth century C.E. Parchment, made from the skins of animals, was developed and used as early as 500 B.C.E. It was used for manuscripts, on rolls, and later as individual leaves used bound in books. The Japanese learned papermaking from the Chinese and developed a folded book called the accordion. It is not sewn together, just glued with covers.



Bookbinding, as we know it today, began in the Christian era. First the accordion-folded scrolls were flattened and later they were turned into books with the sheets tied together at one side through holes punched in the margins.



In about the 5th century, books with folded sheets of parchment were sewn together over leather thongs for more strength. Thin wooden boards were placed at the top and bottom to protect the pages. Thus, the art of binding developed as leather was used to cover the boards, encouraging embellishment of covers and the development of the rich art of binding.

Although the book did not originate in Europe, it is the bookmaking that developed in Europe, with which we are familiar with. We are accustomed to title pages, page numbers, and illustrations. The design and materials of bindings adapted to the new book form.

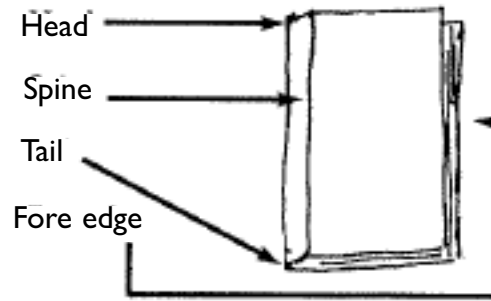
Since the 1950's there has been a resurgence of the book as an art form. Bookbinders are considered artist bookmakers. The modern book arts movement encompasses more than one tradition. There are the fine press printers who seek unpublished texts and produce distinctively bound letterpress on fine paper. And there are artists producing one-of-a-kind books or books in limited numbers. Some of these works are not done in the traditional sense but are sculptures, canvasses, and three-dimensional objects. Some have no words, are made of found objects or of non traditional materials such as Mylar, plastic, or string. Each book is a unique creation.

Throughout its history, the book has been a symbol of intellectual achievement, as well as an object of beauty. It is a vital part of our culture and will endure as long as there are those who appreciate the aesthetic and tactile pleasure it offers.

It was William Morris, who established the Kelmscott Press in 1890, that said the human hand would produce books with more spirit, more energy, and more humanity in them than could a machine.

Key Words/Vocabulary:

- Colophon, a statement at the end of a book that answers the reason the book was made, how the illustrations were made, how the text was put in the book, and what kind of paper was used.



Questions For Looking:

What is this artwork? What is the title? From what is it made? How was it made? Is this book a sculpture? Are all books never or always a sculpture? What shape or form is this book?

What is this book's purpose? Can I hold it and open it? What will happen? Is this a good piece of art? (At this point discuss the book using the elements and principles of art in order to establish the qualities of this book).

In her colophon, the artist says this book is an autobiographical pictorial account of her life. Do you think the pictures tell us about her? What if she had just used words? Is a book a good way to tell people about you? Can you think of other ways? If you were to make an artwork telling about who you are, what would you choose? What is a colophon?

Art Production

Materials:

Twine (2 – 3 ft. lengths)

Scissors

Beads

Hole punch 1/4"

Paints, crayons, or colored pencils

White drawing paper 6" x 9"

Card stock or poster board for the cover 6" x 9"

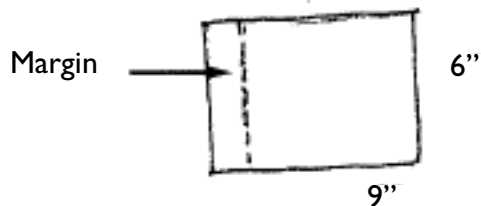
Tissue paper 6" x 9"

Glue sticks

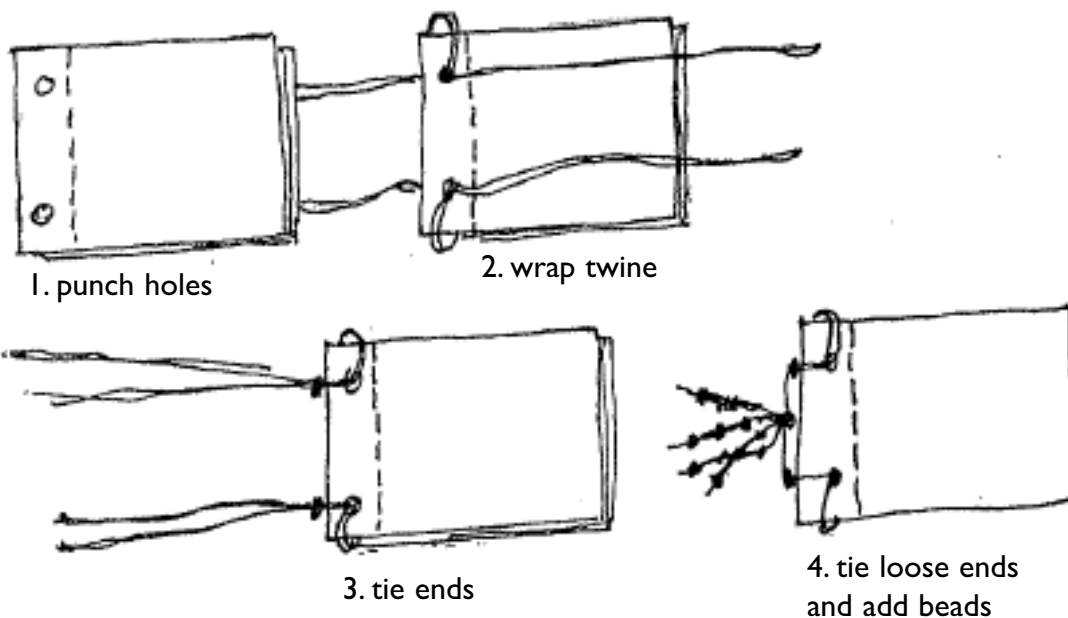
Each student will need to bring between 6 and 10 photos of themselves, family, and friends. Make Xerox copies of the photos and return the original photos to the student.

Directions:

- 1) Instruct the students to design a page for each photo, sequencing them so that they tell their life story. Encourage them to use elements of color, line, texture, and shapes to design patterns that resemble Sas Colby's book.
- 2) Glue the trimmed pictures onto the decorated pages.
- 3) Encourage a minimum use of words.
- 4) Caution the students to leave a 1" margin on the left hand side of the paper for binding.



- 5) Make a title page and title the book.
- 6) Make a page for the colophon. Then write a colophon. They may wish to do a dedication page as well.
- 7) Design a cover using color, line, texture, and shapes. Encouraged some experimental and daring designs that would encourage a reader to pick up their book.
- 8) Make two end pages from the colored tissue paper.
- 9) Assemble the book according to the pictures.



Assessment:

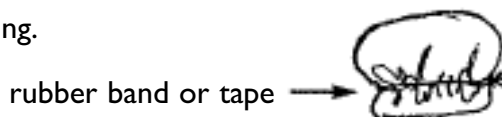
- 1) Observe and note the student's participation in the discussion.
- 2) Observe student's use of production time.
- 3) Assess the relationship (harmony of the title of the book).

Extensions: The following are some suggested activities that could be used for page decorations.

Photo Transfer Process

Materials:

- Xerox copies of photos
- Turpentine solution (1 part turpentine to 4 parts water and a chip from a bar of soap) or acetone. Please note that Turpentine and acetone are dangerous chemicals and should not be used by or around young children.
- Old tee shirt folded to make a pad for rubbing.



Directions: Place the copies face down on the page for the book. Pour some of the transfer liquid on the tee shirt pad. Gently rub the back of the copy with the pad. Put the pad aside and pull the copy from the page. The transfer of the photo should now be on the page. Throw the Xerox copy away.

Student Made Stamps

Materials:

- White vinyl erasers
- Sharp or pointed tools (ie. Toothpicks, paper clips pulled out, Xacto knives, skewers.)

Directions: Instruct the students to “dig” out shapes and lines in the eraser using a sharp tool. When complete, use an ink pad to stamp designs onto the book pages.

Cardboard Stamps

Materials:

- Scissors
- Cardboard, chipboard, or tag board.
- Glue
- String
- Watercolor, brushes (brayers if they are available) or crayons

Directions:

- 1) Cut shapes from the cardboard
- 2) Glue the shapes and string to another piece of cardboard.
- 3) Brush paint onto cardboard shapes.
- 4) Press page onto the cardboard shapes.

OR

- 5) Place the page on top of the clean, unpainted stamp. Make crayon rubbings of the shapes and lines.

See illustrations on the next page.

1. Cut out shapes.
Glue to a cardboard
piece.



2. Paint the
shapes.



3. Lay page
over block.

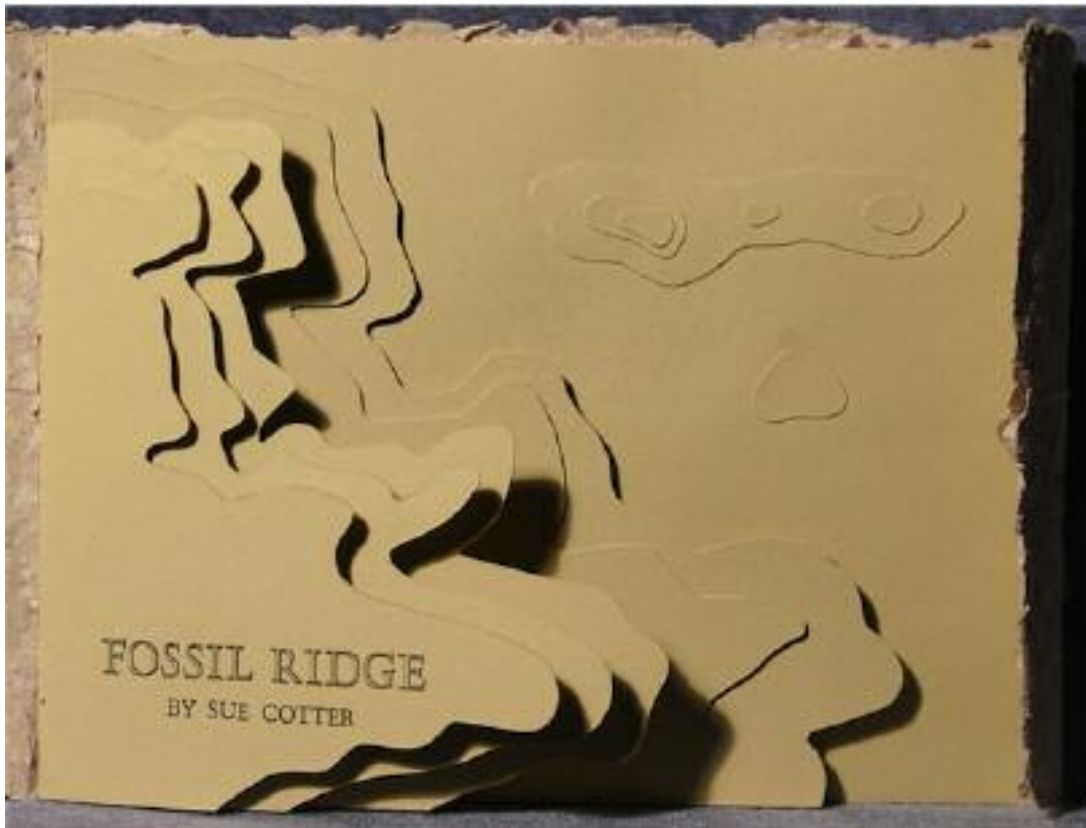
4. Rub page firmly.



5. Lift off printed page.

Fossil Ridge

Sue Cotter



Written by Gladys Muren

Sue Cotter received a Bachelor of Art degree from the University of Nevada, Reno, in 1983 with an emphasis in painting. With her paintings, Cotter always felt she was depicting a story. She loved to write and wanted to introduce text into painting so she enrolled in a class at University of Nevada, Reno entitled History and Practice of Printing taught by Robert Blesse and she learned how to use a printing press. Fossil Ridge was a class project for this printing class and her first book with a letter press. Here she began to combine imagery with text to create limited editions and one-of-a-kind “artist’s books.” The artist is now owner/operator of Woodhenge Press & Paperworks, a letterpress and papermaking studio in Parowan, Utah. She exhibits throughout the country and teaches book arts workshops whenever possible. Cotter creates handmade art works, often with western landscape as their theme. Among her awards, Cotter was the 1992-93 winner of the Utah Arts Council Visual Arts Fellowship.

Sue Cotter, American
Fossil Ridge, 1988
Paper, cord, pigment
Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum
1992.026.003



ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

“Thematically my focus is on nature and our human relationship with it. I seek those borderline encounters which catch us with one door in our contemporary society and one foot in a pre-Cartesian, mytho-magical past; moments when these two views clash and confuse us. With my books and my paintings I hope to create or re-create these encounters for the reader/viewer/participant. My inspiration and materials come from the landscape that surrounds me and from my own experiences with birds, snakes, rocks, sagebrush, weathered bones and hot, dry wind.”

ABOUT THE BOOK – Description:

Colophon:

- 1) “Twenty-four copies of this book were hand-set in Bembo type and printed on Rives BFK buff. Each page was hand cut and sewn in a binding of handmade paper. All writing, design, typesetting, printing, cutting, paper making, and binding done by Sue Cotter in Spring of 1988.” (Signed and dated by the author)
- 2) A string tie is used to fasten the book. Individual pages are hand cut to suggest topographic contour lines in relief.

Background:

In her paintings, Cotter often worked with topographic maps, being drawn to nature’s shapes depicted on the maps. Her college roommate was a geology major and she often looked at her books. Cotter says she had “an innate love of maps,” and growing up in Las Vegas, she always had an interest in desert topography. In frequent flights over the desert, she admired its shapes and colors. Abstract art was the art of the day when Cotter was studying, but she decided that, “nature has created the best shapes and color.” Cotter’s work is often in response to the name of a place; a name first interests her. Fossil Ridge looked like and how the fossils had been found there in layers. In *Fossil Ridge*, she used the pages of the book as layers of topography. The artist also considered how indigenous people named places after what they saw there, or what they experienced, rather than naming a place after a person. Consequently, their names of places are more descriptive, such as “The Place Where I Saw a Hawk.”

Every page of *Fossil Ridge* was hand cut and the pages were printed before they were cut, requiring the printing processes to be precise. Finding a cover paper was difficult because of the book’s unusual shape, which prompted Sue to make the cover paper herself, a first-time endeavor. The color of the handmade paper is the color and texture of the desert, “sand, dusty, a conglomerate” according to the artist. In response to nature, in subsequent books, Sue has often used materials from nature, such as bones and twigs. *Fossil Ridge* is an example of the artist’s desire to combine imagery with text. It is an expression of her love of nature and her desire to produce a book using interesting shapes.

Other books by Sue Cotter include *Prayer Book* and *Spider Grandmother: A creation Story*.

References:

Visual Arts Bulletin, Vol. 11, No. 2, Summer 1992, Utah Arts Council
Notes from a telephone conversation with Sue Cotter on August 10, 2000 with Gladys Muren

Text to Fossil Ridge

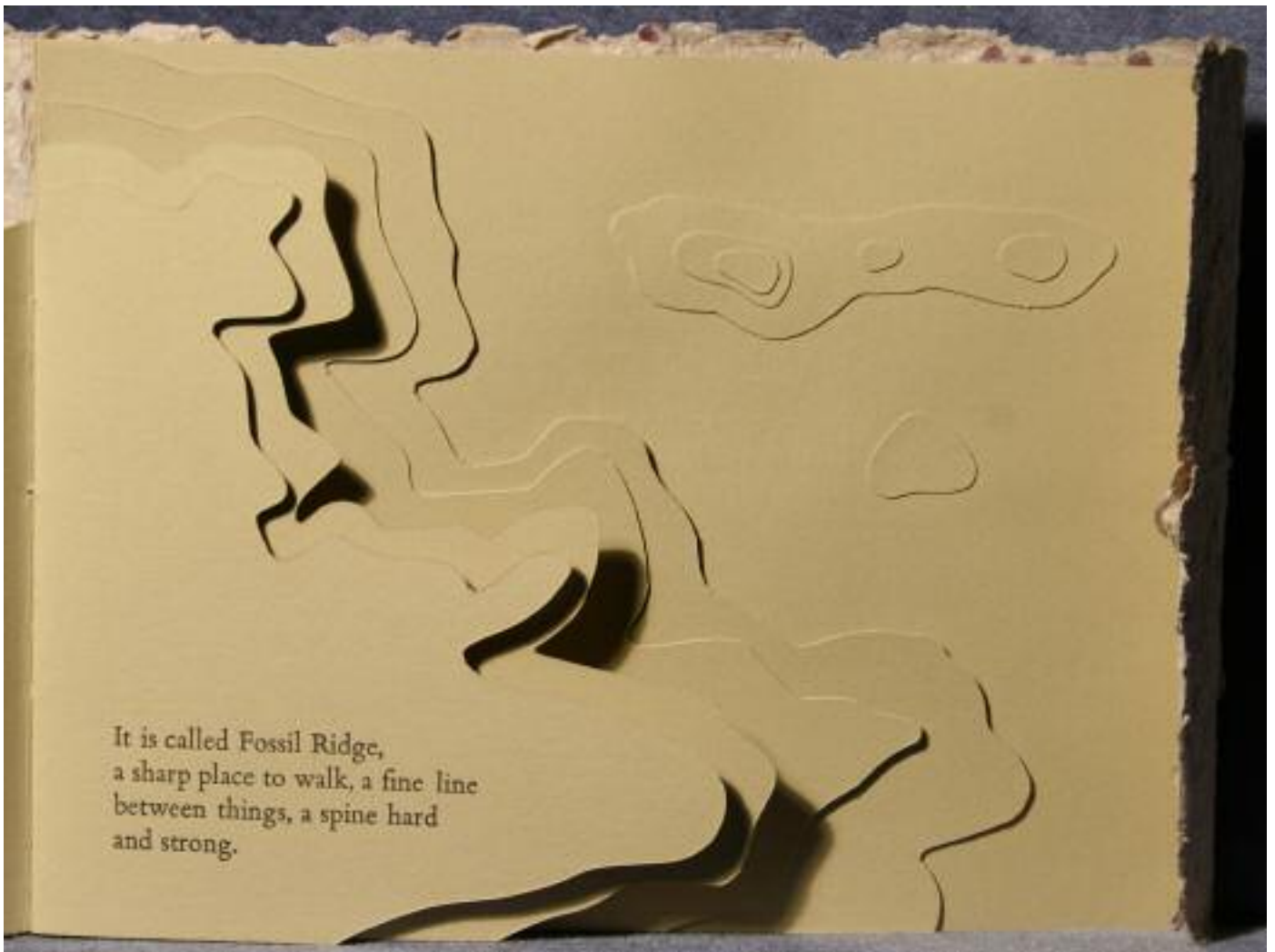
It is called Fossil Ridge, a sharp place to walk, a fine line between things, a spine hard and strong.

Craggy wedge, arrow-headed cleaving sky, cleaving air. A reaching place, a cloud touching place whose outline speaks a slow moving thought.

Wind skinned edges let bones fall, secret bones, ancient bones, white like ashes, white like death, desert dry.

Bleached bones, graceful stones, porcelain pieces cast in time. Slow rock time, long fossil time, time of ancient life, ancient death.

It is called Fossil Ridge, studded crest of pikes and steeple, a place to walk high, a place to walk low; a place of future life and future earth.



Fossil Ridge

“Exploration of Contours ” Lesson

written by Tami Searle

Objectives:

- 1) Students will discover what the term “contour” means.
- 2) Students will learn how to draw contour lines.
- 3) Students will compare contours used in various places.
- 4) Students will learn the use of contour lines in art.

Grade Levels: 3 to 12

Time Frame: 3 to 6 days

Links to Core:

Level 2, 1020-0101

- Create an image of a person or object by copying its outline or contour onto a piece of paper.

Level 5, 1050-0202

- Create works of art using the elements and principles.
- Use contour lines to indicate the form of objects.

Foundations I – Seventh/Eighth, 1100-0101

- Begin a drawing by using simple shapes of gestural line for blocking in.

Key Words/Vocabulary:

- Contour
- Blind contour
- Visual contour
- Line drawing

Extension Connections to Other Areas of the Curriculum:

Dance: this lesson can also be used to reinforce line and shape used by dancers.

Science: A study of fossils and how scientists use them to study the animal or plant. Also, the study of how fossils are formed.

Bibliography for Teachers:

Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, by Betty Edwards

Drawing on the Artist Within, by Betty Edwards

Instructional Materials Needed:

- Paper bags (lunch bag size) one per student plus 3 extra
- Small objects to fit inside of the paper bags
- Pencil for each student
- 3 – 4 sheets of paper per/student

Questions for Looking:

- 1) What is a fossil? How is a fossil made? What can a scientist learn from studying a fossil?
- 2) How might a fossil be considered art? Would it be considered a silhouette? Why or why not? What might an artist learn from studying a fossil?
- 3) Look at the images from the book *Fossil Ridge*. In what way are these images art?
- 4) What kind of lines do you see in these the book? Straight or organic? Do these lines have a mood?

Directions:

- 1) Hand out a pencil and paper to each student.
- 2) Begin by passing the paper bag around the room with a fairly simple (non complex) object inside. Explain to the students that they are not to look inside, but only to feel the object without seeing it. After they have had a chance to feel the object, have them draw what they felt. Try to be as accurate as possible.
- 3) Have the students now look at the object in the bag and see how close they came to the actual object. Ask the students how this might be compared to a scientist trying to study a fossil? (They only have part of the information, not everything.)
- 4) Explain to the students that the lines they drew were called “contour lines.” These are lines that represent an object. Contour lines show the outline and details of the object, but not any shadows, textures, colors, etc.
- 5) Show the students the images of *Fossil Ridge*. Have them describe where they see contour lines in these images. What details do you see? Are there other things like color and texture in these images?
- 6) Next, pair students up with a partner. Give one person in each pair another piece of paper. The other person is given another paper bag with an object in it. The person with the paper bag is asked to look inside the bag at the object, but they may not take it out of the bag. The person with the bag must now describe the object for the person with the paper. They may not give the name of the object. The person with the paper must attempt to draw the object according to the information given them by their partner. When they are finished, have them compare the drawing with the actual object.
- 7) Have students discuss, how hard it was to draw the object. How accurate they were able to draw the object. What might their partner have done to make the job or drawing the object easier? If desired, have students switch places with their partner and trade jobs.
- 8) Now give each student another piece of paper. Have them draw their own hand without looking at the paper. They may only look at their hand. (This activity is described in *Drawing On the Right Side of the Brain* and *Drawing On the Artist Within*, p. 146.) They must include fingernails, knuckles, jewelry etc. When they are finished drawing their hand, they may then, and only then, look at the paper.
- 9) Now have students redraw their hand, however, they may look at the paper while drawing. Students should notice two things-- first: how much better the second drawing was than the first, and second: how much better the second drawing was than if they had drawn it only once while looking.

Exploratory Activity:

As an expansion of this lesson, students could bring “found object” to class, and make Plaster of Paris impressions. They would then trade impressions with each other, and draw the object as it would appear in reality or describe how the object might have been used in another time or civilization.

Self-assessment:

Have students write a summary of the entire experience, have them describe the feeling and emotions they had during each activity. Have them explain what they learned. See suggested hand-out on the next page:

Fossil Ridge Activity Assessment

Name: _____

Date: _____

- 1) Describe how you felt drawing an object that you could only feel but not see.
 - A) Was it hard or easy to draw the object accurately?
 - B) What information that your partner gave you was the most helpful?

- 2) Describe how it felt to draw an object that you could only hear about.
 - A) Was it more difficult to draw the picture or to describe it?
 - B) What information that your partner gave you was the most helpful?

- 3) Describe how it felt to draw your hand without being able to see the paper.
 - A) Is seeing the object more helpful than touching it or hearing it described? Why or why not?

- 4) What did you learn from this activity?



Art of the Book

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Lesson Plans for Educators

October 11, 2000

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