
In honor of the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Helen Warren DeGolyer Triennial Competition for American Bookbinding, the 2015 Award Commission will be Mrs. DeGolyer’s copy of Middleton's classic manual of bookbinding, signed by the author. The work offers a comprehensive overview of traditional restoration techniques, tools, and materials. The volume is illustrated with numerous black and white photographs by the author and his bindery assistant, Eric Horne, and detailed drawings and diagrams by Aldren A. Watson.

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**Priscilla Spitler**  
**Truth or Consequences, New Mexico**

**Winner: 2015 DeGolyer Award for American Bookbinding**

Priscilla Spitler studied printmaking at the California College of Arts and Crafts, receiving a BFA in 1975. She also studied hand bookbinding at the London College of Printing (1980-81). She was edition bookbinder at the Palace Press of the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe from 1982 thru 1986, and at BookLab, Inc., in Austin from 1987 to 1995. Her own Hands On Bookbinding studio was established in Austin in 1995 and has been located in Truth or Consequences since 2007. Spitler's unique leather bindings and artist books have been exhibited internationally. Recipient of the 2015 Helen Warren DeGolyer Award for American Bookbinding, she also received the award in 2009.

**Proposal:**

If one was to visit Bernard Middleton’s bindery in the 1970s, when this text was published, it would not have been unusual to find a cat or two curled up in a corner. Proposed binding to be bound in brown Hewit goatskin in a laced-on boards binding with raised bands on the spine. Traditional gold lines and decorative stamps will be tooled on the spine, along with two green leather labels, gold stamped in two panels. Front and back boards would be framed by gold lines around large green leather panels, each containing a recess for the cut foil, stamped goatskin onlays of sleeping cats.

**Example:**


Bound in two colors of gray Hewit and Harmatan goatskin leathers in a laminate case. Decorated with three fish designs made with stamped, cut foils. Paste papers by the binder. Blind tooling and a silver stamped title.
Jana Pullman
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Award for Excellence in Fine Binding

Book artist, binder, and conservator Jana Pullman has been involved in the book arts since 1983. She received her initial training at the University of Wisconsin-Madison working with Walter Hamady and Jim Dast and at the University of Iowa working with Kim Merker, Bill Anthony, and Tim Barrett. After receiving her MFA in 1988, she supervised the Repair Unit for the General Collection at the Marriott Library at the University of Utah, focusing on book repair. After four years she returned to Iowa again to work with Tim Barrett as the Apprentice/Manager at the University of Iowa Oakdale Paper Facility. There she made handmade papers tailored for book and paper conservation and assisted with ongoing research at the facility. Since 1997 she has been based in Minneapolis where she is currently the owner of Western Slope Bindery, specializing in custom binding and repair of books. She focuses her artistic energies on design binding and participates in book exhibitions.

Proposal:

Bound in full brown goat skin with gold tooling to acknowledge the look of older books. To add a more contemporary feel, two images based on illustrations from the book will be done with back-pared onlays and leather line onlays. Edges to be sponge painted and hand sewn silk headbands will be added. Marbled endpapers with sewn-in leather hinges.

Example:


Bound in full terracotta goatskin with back-pared black and green onlays and leather line onlays. Cover images based on one of the illustrations by Rockwell Kent in the text. Top edge decorated with copper paint and a hand sewn three color silk headband. Copper decorative endpapers.
Samuel Feinstein
Chicago, Illinois

Award for Design

Samuel Feinstein trained at the North Bennet Street School in Boston and has been in private practice since graduating in June 2012. He specializes in fine bindings, gold finishing, new bindings in period style, and luxury clamshell boxes.

Proposal:

Full red goatskin leather fine binding sewn on German tapes, laced into boards. The top edge decorated in alternating sections of gold and palladium prior to sewing. Double-core silk headbands. Pastedowns and flyleaves of a “Dutch curl” marbled paper. Boards tooled in gold and palladium with black leather onlays, with the titling placed along the curve within the black onlaid rings. The palladium lines continue over the board edges and onto the turn-ins. A single gilt line is tooled on the board edges, breaking at the palladium lines. Four gilt rules on the turn-ins which break at the palladium lines. The finished volume is to be housed in a full cloth clamshell box with a tooled leather label.

My design seeks to show the beauty of historical binding elements within a modernized context, a use of traditional techniques in a manner which is not strictly traditional. Here I am attempting to demonstrate the relevance of bookbinding history in modern fine bindings. The design alludes to Mr. Middleton’s own style as an homage: the optically centered elaborate motifs on each board, bold use of line, and allowing the beauty of the materials to speak for themselves. The medallions on each board are inspired by late seventeenth-century gold-tooled bindings with the “drawer-handle” motif. Understanding the practices, and especially the subtleties, of previous eras is absolutely crucial when approaching a book for restoration. It is essential when approaching any binding project, even when it is to be disregarded in cases where the book itself calls out for a contemporary designed binding.

Example:


Full goatskin leather binding with sewn-in leather hinge and handmade flax paper flyleaf which has the look of parchment. The book was sewn on five German woven tapes with linen thread, the edges were gilt “in the rough” without trimming, and the tapes were laced into the boards. Double-core silk headbands. After spine linings, a hollow was attached with false raised bands to emulate raised cord sewing. The book was covered in natural grained brown goatskin. The sewn in hinges were placed down and doublures were pasted in. The binding was tooled with 23 carat gold leaf and carbon, with many different colored leather onlays. The clasps were designed by the binder and made by Joycelyn Merchant, a jeweler, bookbinder, and clasp-maker.

The Book of Revelation is filled with both divine and depraved imagery and this design is based on that dichotomy within the book: the front cover represents the former and the rear cover represents the latter. A significant element is based on the press’s decision to base the text on the Geneva Bible, first published in 1560. The book called for a look back to the decoration of sixteenth-century bindings. I combined onlaid strap-work, an element from gold-tooled bindings of this time, with carbon-tooled motifs based on sixteenth-century blind-tooled bindings, using a single “head-and-shoulders” tool on four sides of an enclosed shape to make a leaf in the negative space.
Ethan Ensign
Salt Lake City, Utah

Ethan Ensign began bookbinding in 1994 and has trained with Don Glaister at the American Academy of Bookbinding in Telluride. He has owned and operated his own bindery since 2000 and has recently begun creating private press editions: making the paper, printing the letterpress text, and binding the books.

Proposal:
Tan calfskin with inlaid calf lettering. Flyleaves and doublures of marbled paper. Brown roma endpapers with calf hinges. Hand sewn double core headbands with brown, tan and white silk. Top edge colored brown with acrylics. To be housed in a linen cloth clamshell box with brown felt liner and gold-stamped label.

Example:

This classic science fiction novel concerns the survival of knowledge through books in a post-apocalyptic world. The binding references use of atomic weapons and the blueprints described in the story. The book is bound in full French chagrin dark blue goatskin with blue suede flyleaves and doublures. Silk headbands sewn in blue and white. Text edges dyed blue. The decoration was tooled and painted with white acrylic lines and colored leather onlays.
Don Etherington is President Emeritus of Etherington Conservation Services. He previously served as the Chief Conservation Officer of the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas in Austin and Training Officer at the Library of Congress. He received the Helen Warren DeGolyer Award for American Bookbinding in 1997.

Proposal:

Full goatskin binding with large onlay across binding, laser cut shapes representing various tools used in bookbinding and restoration, and gold-tooled borders for onlays. This proposal for The Restoration of Leather Bindings reflects the subject of the book while the gold-tooled lines are a nod to Bernard’s bindings.

Example:


Full brown goatskin binding with onlays, titled in black.
Erin Fletcher was introduced to the craft of bookbinding under the instruction of Susannah Kite Strang while studying at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She experimented with a variety of simple book structures, pushing the concept of the book as an art form. This initial exposure to bookbinding created a desire to develop a deeper understanding of the craft.

Attending the North Bennet Street School, Fletcher received training in historical and contemporary bookbinding techniques from Jeff Altepeter. Martha Kearsley provided additional training in basic book and paper conservation. An eight month internship in the Rare Book Room of the Boston Public Library followed. In 2012 she opened Herringbone Bindery, providing custom one-of-a-kind and edition hand bookbinding, box-making, and basic conservation for individual clients, book dealers, and institutions.

Proposal:

Bound in full brown goatskin using traditional hand embroidery techniques in gilt thread to imitate a historical gilt panel design. Line border on outer panel and along board edges are hand tooled and gilt. Spine decorated with mix of embroidered and hand tooled gilt motifs. Title and author’s name hand tooled and gilt in Baskerville. Board edges and turn-ins hand tooled and gilt. Zerkall Book Laid Vellum endpapers. Hand-sewn single-core headbands in green and white linen thread.

To conserve an object is to show patience, intelligence and dedication, qualities which Middleton emphasizes in the foreword of his book. In a way restoring a volume also pays homage to the history of the binding, as well as respect for the techniques employed in creating the binding. I propose to bind The Restoration of Leather Bindings as a design binding incorporating techniques and designs typically seen on deluxe bindings of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century in England. The inspiration for choosing this specific period came from a particular book (mounted on proposal board) photographed several times in The Restoration of Leather Bindings. My decision to artistically imitate this binding, using period-appropriate techniques mixed with unconventional design techniques stems from the same attitude put forth by Middleton. I wish to pay homage to the book and its author by preserving a historical binding style by combining old techniques with unlikely materials.

Example:

Margaret Armstrong, in collaboration with J. J. Thomber. Field Book of Western Wild Flowers. New York: C. P. Putnam’s Sons, [copyright 1915].

Gabrielle Fox received a diploma in Bookbinding from the Guildford College of Further and Higher Education in the United Kingdom. Her instructors there included Maureen Duke, Daphne Beaumont-Wright and Tony Miles. She travels often to care for collections and teach, most recently to Toronto as the Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild Visiting Artist of 2014. Fox returned in May 2015 to the American Academy of Bookbinding in Telluride to teach miniature design binding. She is the author of The Essential Guide to Making Handmade Books and looks forward to the publication of her history of the Larkspur Press of Monterey, Kentucky.

Proposal:

The hand tooling along the colored leather strips represent traditional lacing-on of boards and Bernard Middleton’s approach to design expressed in his Recollections: A Life in Bookbinding. (This sample is only a representation of the decorative tools that will be used.) The haphazardness of the onlays represents the elements that need to be placed back in order when a leather binding is restored. The structure is the most recent variation of a binding I have been working with for more than twenty years. This variation provides a full leather spine. It is a combination that incorporates the flat opening of the hollow tube and the solid structure of a tight back. Sewing the text in as the final step is ideal for conservation bindings. The proposed binding will be full goatskin with goatskin onlays. The tooling will be done by hand in gold. The layer of leather at the inside spine will be alum tawed goatskin. Doublures and flyleaves will be goatskin with onlays and gold tooling. Drawings and any other ephemera will be enclosed in a heavy paper portfolio placed inside a drop spine cloth box with the binding.

Example:


The design is inspired by Ladislav Hanka’s powerful and beautiful engravings and the story, which many bookbinders had never heard fully before, about Jan Sobota. I used to believe that it was terribly sad when someone died and had not been able to do all the things they had hoped to achieve in their lifetime. Now I believe it would be sad if one had finished the list. This is represented in the spring and autumn leaves and the cycle of the beginning of life rather than the end of one. The binding structure is one that I have been playing around with for more than twenty years. It is simple, basic, and I love that the text can be removed at any time with no damage to the paper or binding. This is the most recent variation of this structure in that there is a full leather spine and the sewing is not visible. It provides the book with the flat opening of the hollow tube and the solid structure of a tight back. The binding is composed of various goatskins with an alum tawed goatskin inner spine. The onlays are of various leathers applied to the surface and then back pared before the inner lining is attached. Headbands are leather and the rivets are gold tooled. Pamela Smith marbled endpapers are utilized and Twinrocker handmade paper leaves have been sewn in with the text at the very end of the volume.
William Franklin
Carrollton, Texas

William Franklin has been an amateur binder for six years, working with Catherine Burkhard of Dallas. He teaches literature, composition, and creative writing at North Central Texas College, incorporating the history of physical and digital books into his courses. A photographer with a longstanding interest in digital imagery, he is particularly intrigued with the interface of digital imaging in various aspects of physical and digital art books.

Proposal:

As *The Restoration of Leather Bindings* is a book on leather work, the subject of leather must be integrated into the design of this binding. But closer examination reveals a book with over one hundred illustrations, many of which are photographs. This binding seeks to honor the evolving tradition of illustration in binding design, with particular reference to English bookbinder Stuart Brockman, whose bindings provided the inspiration to begin working with images under transparent vellum.

The entire book will be bound in terra cotta Harmatan goat skin. Inlaid into a frame built of layers of binder's board, the front cover features a photograph taken and printed by the binder, applied to heavy matte paper, and covered with transparent vellum. Inlaid into the back cover is a composition incorporating the iconic but uncredited "working hands" photograph with the binder's photograph, both under a piece of transparent vellum, together with some tools and leathers. Edge-to-edge doublures featuring the traditional "working hands" image will be printed on Arches Aquarelle Rag paper. The flysheets will be printed on Canon Matte Photographic paper. The headbands will be sewn into the text block in a French double pattern composed of various colors of silk echoing those in the photographs.

Example:


This well-used paperback had a broken spine, necessitating repair utilizing a single-sheet reconstruction. While viewing an exhibition of the Designer Bookbinders at Oxford University a few years ago, I saw a book bound by Stuart Brockman featuring a cover bound with a watercolor painting covered with transparent vellum. Visiting Brockman at his bindery, he provided some advice on techniques and I began work on this project. The cover image is an inkjet print on matte paper of my original digital image entitled "The End of the World." The transparent vellum was affixed to the image, then used to cover the boards for the binding. The edges of the text block were decorated with blown acrylic spray; the headbands are sewn in.
A seventy-three year old trial lawyer, Wilfredo Geigel began bookbinding as a serious hobby almost twenty years ago. Following classes in San Juan, Puerto Rico, he joined the Guild of Book Workers and has since taken courses at the American Academy of Bookbinding in Telluride, Colorado and classes with Helen Solie, Don Etherington, and Edwin Heym. Geigel has also lectured and written essays on the art of bookbinding.

Proposal:

My design proposal will humbly attempt to reflect symbolically what one of the great master binders performs in his work. The book would be rounded and backed and bound in a full dark red goatskin following the French technique, to highlight the importance of restoration in the conservation of books. The front and back covers will have an indented rectangular space covered with inlaid lacunose mat representing the joining and meshing of pieces of leather, usually required in the restoration of books. Both the front and back cover will have a series of parallel indented straight lines representing the various straightforward requirements for returning the book to its original elegance. The headbands will be sewn with three different color threads and the interior of the covers will be dressed in an edge-to-edge doublure. The book will be housed in a linen covered clam shell case.

Example:

Ignacio Balcells. La mar: una versión de la vida ante el mar y del viaje a solas por las costas de Chile. Santiago, Chile: Editorial Andrés Bello, 2001.

The volume was rounded and backed and full bound following the French style with three different pieces of leather used to form the outline of the shoreline of the sea. The intent was to represent the title of the book, La mar, which means the sea. The top edge was covered with graphite and the headbands were sewn with three silk threads in different colors.
M. Sue Gilly  
Dallas, Texas

M. Sue Gilly has studied bookbinding with David Lawrence at the Craft Guild of Dallas since 2005, and has taken a workshop in gold tooling with Stuart Brockman. She participated in "The Thread That Binds," a 2011 exhibition presented by the Lone Star Chapter of the Guild of Book Workers. Gilly also participated in the 2012 DeGolyer Triennial Exhibition and Competition.

Proposal:

Decorated case binding in full tan goatskin with onlays of multiple colors of goatskin having transferred images/text, and onlays of leather lacing. Multi-colored leather stuck-on headbands; all edges toned with brown inks; decorative endpapers by Catherine Levine. Transfers made using Acrylic Gel Medium, laser copy/print images or text, and light colored leather. One thick coat of medium brushed onto image/text, placed face down onto the leather, put into a press for several hours, and allowed to dry thoroughly. Paper is removed from the leather using water and a soft, smooth cloth.

The design is meant to convey the textbook aspect of Middleton’s book, with the look of a restored leather binding and the sophistication of a design binding. This is achieved through the use of traditional tan leather background, colorful onlays, grids of lacing, text/image transfers, colorful headbands, and pastedowns to create an integral presentation.

Example:


Flat spine tight back case binding (Islamic-style, adapted) in full black goatskin with inlays of white bonded leather (75% leather) with full-color transfers of van Gogh paintings; title blind stamped. Hand embroidered Islamic headband (straight weaving) in blue and yellow silk; top edge graphite; blue lokta endpapers with gold painted accents. Full black cloth protective box with details from several van Gogh paintings.
Karen Hanmer
Glenview, Illinois

Karen Hanmer has studied with Priscilla Spitler, Scott Kellar, Don Etherington, and Monique Lallier, and holds one of only eight diplomas in fine binding from the American Academy of Bookbinding. She has served as Exhibitions Chair for the Guild of Book Workers and on the editorial board of The Bonefolder, a peer reviewed, open access book arts journal. Hanmer was awarded the 2009 DeGolyer Competition Jury Prize for Binding. She offers workshops and private instruction focusing on a solid foundation in basic binding skills.

Proposal:


The Restoration of Leather Bindings is the first binding manual I encountered in which the illustrations realistically portray work in progress, not just awkward disembodied hands or static images of tools and equipment. My design shows both a completed restoration and a restoration in process using techniques from the text and vignettes from Middleton’s autobiography and the video interview produced by the Society of Bookbinders. Processes include lifting leather for a reback and replacing the old spine on the new, touching up aged gold tooling, sprinkling, toning leather with Crosse and Blackwell gravy browning, use of a graining pallet (included here as a border in the Cambridge panel), and the pleasures and challenges of welcoming cats into the bindery. The addition of pop-ups scanned from illustrations in the text further animate the binding. The proposed color palette references the printed wrapper of the first edition. I am also inspired by 2003 DeGolyer Award for American Bookbinding recipient Jamie Kamph, who said she likes to include a surprise in the design for the rear board.

Example:


Full goatskin binding with laced-in boards. Trade book disbound, guarded, and resewn on flattened cords; leather hinges; doublures and flexi-endsheets of marbled paper by Pamela Smith. Hand sewn, double-core silk headbands; three edges sprinkled with blue acrylic ink. Blind title and tooling, acrylic pochoir. Illustrations from the text have been scanned and laser printed onto goatskin onlays. Illustrations scanned from the text and inkjet printed onto Mohawk Superfine cover, hand cut into pop-ups, and sewn inside each of the text block’s ten signatures.

The design for this binding is inspired by the text’s charming vintage illustrations, many of which feature disembodied hands performing common binding tasks.

Tooling and pochoir further illuminate aspects of structure and process: beating the text block prior to sewing, sawing in sewing stations, lacing on boards, turning in and forming corners, tooling, and the figure-eight motion of the polishing iron.
Rose Harms
Boerne, Texas

Rose Harms earned a BFA in painting and an MFA in printmaking from the University of Texas at San Antonio. During graduate school she first became interested in fine press and artists’ books and in creating her own books. Postgraduate studies at the Southwest School of Art in San Antonio included papermaking and book arts; she also taught book arts at the school for ten years. She is a member of the Guild of Book Workers and the San Antonio Calligrapher’s Guild.

Proposal:

Bernard C. Middleton’s words reveal a mind long-trained to salvage even the most decayed book materials: I imagine a vine trained upon a trellis that sprouts new leaves. The green cotton book cloth is to be silkscreened with the image of a vine on a trellis. The text will be bound using a long stitch through a slotted wrapper with black kangaroo and black Hahnemühle Bugra pastedowns. The text is to be sewn with dark green linen thread. The book title will be blind-stamped on the side of the quarter leather and on the spine of the accompanying clamshell box.

Example:


The text is from a softcover book I disassembled and reassembled as a long stitch binding through a slotted wrapper. Brown quarter leather is sanded kangaroo with handmade book cloth sides. The cotton book cloth is imaginatively silkscreened with good bug guardians. The inside wrapper is covered with sanded brown kangaroo and botanical homemade paper pastedowns. Endpapers are botanical handmade and Hahnemühle Gutenberg papers. All signatures are guarded with Japanese kozo sewn onto the wrapper with yellow linen thread. The book title is blind-stamped.
B. E. Hoffman  
Fort Worth, Texas

Hoffman first began bookbinding at the Craft Guild of Dallas in the mid-1990s. She returned to the craft eight years ago at Books 'n Letters Studio, where she continues to work and study. She restores Bibles, historical ledgers, and other volumes for individuals and organizations.

Proposal:

The inspiration for this design is a combination of the initial letter M in the author's surname and this quotation from his preface to The Restoration of Leather Bindings: "Experience, intelligence, and imagination must be combined if the work of the restorer is to be successful."

A large graphic M signifies Middleton's last name and his long, productive, and influential career. The quotation cited above is blind embossed within the M: the words contained within the letter represents Middleton's wealth of knowledge that he generously shares with the bookbinding community. Various fonts and sizes are used to provide emphasis, but all are blind embossed to keep these in the background. The small red diamond symbolizes his success as a binder and restorer as well as a teacher of fine binding. It also implies that success is not attained until you build upon the tenets he presents, precept by precept. As a reference book, the volume should open flat and stay open hands-free during use. For these reasons, I have chosen a contemporary sewn-boards binding done on tapes with link stitch for strength. Harmitan leather in black and yellow were selected because there are few absolutes (no black and white) in restoration. Red is used as an accent color to signify success and the joy of binding. Sewn boards binding, link stitch on tapes, full leather cover in yellow and black Harmitan with small accents of color. Title is stamped in foil. The endpapers are hand decorated paper by Nan Kirby. Edges are yellow with black sprinkle.

Example:


Sewn boards binding, French link stitch on tapes. Covered with black cloth on spine and purple tweed cloth on the boards. Marbled endpapers. Gold stamped title.
Lang Ingalls
Crested Butte, Colorado

Lang Ingalls graduated in 2007 from the American Academy of Bookbinding where she studied under Tini Muira and Monique Lallier. Since then she has studied with others including Don Glaister, Edwin Heim, and Ana Ruiz-Larrea to further hone her skills. Presently working from her atelier in Crested Butte, Lang exhibits her work regularly in the United States and abroad.

Proposal:

I like the idea of a historical structure, a stiff-board parchment binding, touched with a bit of modernity by utilizing modern papers in the interior. Binding in red parchment over boards, using the “floating boards” method. Flyleaves and parchment-core headbands in custom, commissioned paper by Claude Braun. Sewing tapes in parchment, but to remain hidden in joint. Cover design and title hand tooled by binder in soft gold. The design on the cover takes inspiration from the “tie-up” featured in figure 57 of The Restoration of Leather Bindings—note that the design is tooled from the cover through to the flyleaves. To be housed in a custom clamshell box.

Example:


Bound in parchment over boards using the “floating boards” method. Parchment backed with Japanese hanako paper which is also used for the flyleaves and headbands. Sewing tapes in parchment, visible through groove. Hand tooled cover design and title on spine in pale gold. The tooling on the cover envelops the natural markings of parchment. The use of modern papers throughout brings a nice mix with the more historical method of parchment covering. Bound in 2014 and housed in a custom clamshell box.
Forrest Jackson
Dallas, Texas

Forrest Jackson began bookbinding in 1997 at the Craft Guild of Dallas where he currently teaches classes on the restoration and conservation of antiquarian books. He has studied under Pamela Leutz, Sally Key, Jan Sobota, and Jim Croft.

Proposal:

For this simple panel design of The Restoration of Leather Bindings, I propose a full black goatskin tight-joint case binding. The sheets will be sewn on three tapes, all text block edges will be gilded, and silk headbands will be sewn by hand. The title will be stamped in gold on the spine and the framed lines and dagger-shaped corner pieces will likewise be tooled before casing in. A custom engraved brass die will impress the author's cascading initials inside the central red leather inlay. Please imagine Bernard Middleton's handwriting in place of the cursive font shown in the design proposal. The binding will also feature marbled endpapers by Catherine Levine. I often refer to Middleton's works when repairing antique books. It would be an honor and a delight to execute a fine binding of The Restoration of Leather Bindings.

Example:


The flat back case binding of Carmilla is covered in full black goatskin and has red leather inlays. The title is stamped, the lines are tooled, and the text block edges are gilded in 22 carat gold. This binding also features sewn silk headbands, marbled endpapers by Catherine Levine, and a frontispiece portrait by Harry O. Morris. The central design illustrates the exhumed vampire's beating heart and the "leaden coffin floated with blood," both of which are chillingly described at the climax of the story. Bound in January 2015.
Jamie Kamph
Lambertville, New Jersey

A binder for forty years, Jamie Kamph initially learned bookbinding from Hope Weil, her friends, and visiting bookbinders. Additional instruction came from studying books and journals and she continues to learn through ongoing experience. A professional member of the American Institute of Conservators and a member of the Guild of Book Workers, Kamph is the proprietor of the Stonehouse Bindery where she produces both restoration and design bindings. In addition to her bookbinding, she has also written extensively about bindings. Oak Knoll Press will publish Tricks of the Trade: Confessions of a Bookbinder in 2015.

**Proposal:**

This design refers to the essential relationship between historical bookbinding styles and hands-on restoration techniques. The hands-on concept is represented by semi-pressed inlays of hands and books, worked in multicolored goatskin on the deep blue Oasis goatskin of the full leather binding. Historical sensibility inspires the spine design, made up from small tools, gilt, in a design reminiscent of sixteenth-century Italian bookbinding. Inlays are partially gold tooled as shown by the gold and lead penciling on the design sheet. Borders are both blind tooled and gold tooled, with the perimeter border subordinate to the inlaid design. The spine is elaborately gold tooled. Fabriano Roma endpapers and silk embroidered headbands will be utilized.

**Example:**


Full wine colored Oasis goatskin binding with semi-pressed inlays of multicolored goatskin representing fruit, vegetables, and bottles. Gold tooled highlights and titling. Silk headbands worked in dark red and green thread. Twinrockers endpapers. The volume is stored in a matching linen grape patterned box.
Esther Kibby
Dallas, Texas

Esther Kibby is a professor, photographer, and fine art binder. She received her MFA in Photography from Texas Woman's University where she also began her studies in book arts. She has been involved in the book arts since 2001, studying with Sally Key, David Lawrence, and Jim Croft. A member of the Guild of Book Workers, Kibby received the Jury Prize for Design in the 2006 Helen Warren DeGolyer Triennial American Bookbinding Competition.

Proposal:

Contemporary full black leather, sewn-on-tape binding with raised thread lines and carved circular insets revealing grey, terra-cotta, and gold leather underneath. Leather joint construction and terra-cotta leather doublures with marbled end sheets by Galen Berry. Hand-sewn silk headbands of terra-cotta, black, grey, and gold. Spine of deep gold with pale yellow leather onlay bands.

Raised thread lines across the covers and spine represent tie downs of traditional core bindings. Scarfed, terra-cotta onlays along the book board spine edge with tooled abstract lines crossing onto the black leather, indicating joint mends in book preservation. The identical, tooled lines are repeated within the raised v-lines on the board fore-edges. Decorative airbrushed fore-edges in gradient terra-cotta to gold to pale yellow. The volume will be housed in a black linen clamshell box.

Example:


Full burgundy leather, sewn-on-tape binding over sculpted boards with embossed purple leather carved insets revealing rust and gold leather underneath. The cover design alludes to the themes of impermanence in Millay's poetry. Hollow back spine and leather joint construction with gold leather doublures. Hand-sewn silk headbands in burgundy, gold, and peach color. Decorative fore-edges with airbrushed gradient flame to peach color, hand lettered book title and hand painted flame motif carried over from the carved book cover motifs. Marbled endpapers by Catherine Levine. The book is housed in a black and deep gold linen clamshell case.
Nancy Nitzberg
Elkins Park, Pennsylvania

Nancy Nitzberg began bookbinding in 1982 at Harvard College Library’s Conservation Unit. After receiving an M.S. in Library Service and a Certificate in Library and Archives Conservation from Columbia University, she served as a professional book conservator in major research libraries and a regional conservation center. In addition to providing conservation and custom bookbinding services through her own business, Book-Care, she recently became the Director of Library Services at Gratz College in Melrose Park, Pennsylvania. Her research interests include the structures and materials of book forms produced around the world through the ages, with attention to the use of local materials and the influence of trade routes and other factors.

Proposal:

I purchased my copy of Bernard C. Middleton’s The Restoration of Leather Bindings while a student at Columbia University’s School of Library Service. In the conservation program we made many models of book structures and various elements of bindings. Now in my studio I have a large bulletin board with items spanning a few decades. My inspiration for the design of this book is to have a bookbinder’s “bulletin board” with models made from the information in Middleton’s book. These are selected to bring a more tangible sense of materials to the informative black and white illustrations.

The deep purple goatskin was selected as a traditional regal hue to honor the author while elements of red symbolize leadership. The warm natural tones of the cork is harmonious with the color tones of the printed paper cover of the book, visually connecting the cover with the text block. Silk headbands in purple and dark gold continue the color scheme. In homage to the author's origins, the endpapers are Cockerell marbled paper from England.

Example:


This binding represents an early nineteenth-century bookbinding style: a smooth spine without raised or faux bands, half red leather binding, and the pattern of the marbled paper. Middleton notes that red leather is vulnerable to fading. Here bright red is used in order to demonstrate how historical bindings looked at the time of production, rather than after more than a century of exposure to light and pollutants.

While the exterior presents traditional aesthetics, the structural elements have been updated. There is a flexible hollow tube spine lining: the leather is not adhered directly to the spine of the text block but to the exterior of a paper lining that is hollow. This allows the text block to flex upward, away from the leather, when the book is opened, thus preserving the spine leather and providing much text block flexibility. This binding can easily be completely opened 180 degrees; the worked linen headbands flex with the text block. I chose this binding as my example as it represents elements in my proposal for The Restoration of Leather Bindings. I would construct a similar hollow tube spine lining structure and the same headband style, but with silk rather than linen thread.
James Reid-Cunningham
Cambridge, Massachusetts

James Reid-Cunningham studied bookbinding with Mark Esser at the North Bennet Street School in Boston. He served as the President of the Guild of Book Workers from 2006 to 2010 and is a professional associate of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. As Deputy Director at the Boston Athenæum, he supervises library and museum services including special collections. He served as the Athenæum’s Chief Conservator from 2003-2011. Prior to joining the Athenæum, he served as Conservator of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University.

Proposal:

This proposed design for The Restoration of Leather Bindings features scarf-joined goatskin and calfskin leathers offset by lines of recessed onlays in white and black leather. The leather will be dyed with aniline dyes. There will be leather hinges and blue marbled flyleaves and pastedowns. The sections will be sewn on frayed-out cords, with the cords laced into the boards. The binding will have front bead silk headbands in brown and red. All edges will be trimmed and decorated with graphite. The binding will be titled on the spine in gold.

Having worked as a book conservator for thirty years and taught classes on leather rebacking many times, I sought a design that incorporates elements of Middleton’s classic rebacking technique. The binding utilizes scarf joins that mimic the angled lift used to hide the repair leather when rebacking. The color palette is a mixture of browns and reds as leather rebackings on historical bindings so often utilize a mixture of those colors. The verticality of the design is reminiscent of the elegant geometry of Middleton’s own fine bindings.

Example:


Laid paper pastedowns decorated with 23 karat gold leaf, then stamped in the center with the universal symbol of flammable materials. Sections sewn on meeting guards; guards sewn on raised linen cords; cords laced into the boards. There are front bead silk headbands. The punctured, multilevel boards were covered in scarf-joined goatskin and calfskin, with tooled lines filled with recessed onlays of white box calf. The edge-to-edge doublures are black Tyvek.
Judy Sgantas  
Stowe, Vermont

Judy Sgantas is an artist concentrating in oils, pencil, color pencil, and ink. The Renaissance period is of particular interest to her, specifically the relationships between the arts and the sciences.

Proposal:

This proposed design for Bernard Middleton’s text was inspired first by reading his book as a bookmaker/artist and second as one who is constantly exploring and studying different structures, old and new. The idea of illustrating the cover came as part of the design process. I sketch out the initial thoughts before executing the design and the time it takes to draw represents the nurturing of that thought. As a former graphic designer I love to hide things, sometimes items of great importance: there is always more to be found if one is willing to look and dig.

Example:

[A bound volume with blank pages serving as a model of the design proposal].

The structure that I have chosen to use is the French bookbinder Benjamin Elbel’s dos rapporté. The volume lies open nicely and is a sturdy structure for a reference book that would be used regularly. The design is on Strathmore 80-pound acid-free wove paper, inside board in binders’ cloth for additional protection. The flysheets are handmade marbled paper. The paper on the inside of the spine with information regarding Mr. Middleton is also on acid-free Strathmore paper. The eight signatures would be sewn in the link-stitch on the ends with cord stitching and covered with a mull for added protection and strength.
James Tapley was fortunate to know and learn from many of the American binders of the last generation including Carolyn Horton, Arno Werner, Laura Young, and Stella Patri. He operates a small one-man workshop where he undertakes a wide range of bookbinding including small edition binding, design binding, conservation, and restoration.

Proposal:

The text is to be bound in a variant on Jean De Gonet's exposed sewing and Renaissance slotted spine styles, the head colored with graphite before sewing with red linen thread over grey box calf tapes. The areas between tapes will be covered in black goat and titled in gilt with no further decoration. The sewing tapes and spine panels are brought over onto the sides where they form the tongues for the planned tongue and slot board attachment. The boards, made with a slot on their spine edges, will be laser cut to a "skyline" in order to accommodate mounted "book spines," five on each board, of various widths and heights, the board edges covered in black goatskin with edge-to-edge shaped doublures of gold sprinkled green kozo facing cinnamon colored suede flyleaves. The faux spines, shaped in low relief, will themselves be covered in a range of leathers and colors, including tawed deerskin, calf, and goatskin, with smooth spines and raised bands, gilt and blind tooled in various styles from the fifteenth through the twentieth centuries, and will result in softly undulating board surfaces. These spines are meant to reflect the range of historical leather bindings brought for repair to a busy workshop and center upon Middleton's text, itself presented in a twenty-first-century binding style.

Example:


The binding is a variant on Jean De Gonet's exposed sewing and Renaissance slotted spine structures. The text block was very lightly trimmed to somewhat even the text, the head was gilt and sprinkled, pastedowns of suminagashi and kozo papers were prepared, and then the whole sewn on five linen tapes using blue linen thread followed by the application of glue with pure gelatin, the spine lightly rounded using finger pressure. The swell from sewing was allowed to settle into its natural state with no further manipulation.

The areas between the tapes were first lined with thin open weave linen brought over onto the sides along with the sewing tapes and then the areas between the tapes were covered in medium blue Harmatan goat, leaving the sewing exposed. The second, third, and fifth spine panels were titled in gilt. The boards were cut to size away from the book and prepared for a tongue and slot attachment after which the outsides were covered in crushed eggshell, blue Japanese lacquer, and gold leaf. The boards were then lined with edge-to-edge doublures of kozo papers. The sewing tapes on the sides were gilt, the boards then attached by gluing the shaped leather wings and tapes along with their linings into the board slots.