



Artists' books by Shawn Soward, Meredith Jones, and Jennie Amador, students of the Spring Semester 2011 Artists' Books class.

MEDIA RELEASE

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University of Utah Offers Book Arts Certificate

Certification is first of its kind regionally

August 22, 2011 – SALT LAKE CITY – The long wait is over. Twelve years after the introduction of the Book Arts Program at the University of Utah, a Certificate in Book Arts has been approved. Between the program's extensive letterpress printing and binding equipment and the newly created emphasis, the Book Arts Program has become the only one of its kind in the intermountain west.

The Book Arts Program started in 1999 with only two classes: Bookbinding and Letterpress Printing. In these classes—and the others that have been added since then—students learn the history of books as well as how to print and bind their own books using traditional and modern techniques.

An ever-increasing interest in book arts prompted the university to add five more classes from 2000 to 2011; Artists' Books is one such course. In this course, students incorporate sculptural and visual art elements into their final book projects, which may stretch the definition of what is considered a book by popular standards. Some examples of students' final projects include a time-traveler's suitcase with narrative brochure and appropriate attire and accoutrements enclosed, a book in which the pages have been cut away to resemble a typographic map and a plexi-glass cube containing home-building materials with collaged text and imagery on each layer.

The Board of Regents will consider the proposal for an undergraduate minor in book arts in

December 2011. If approved, it will mean that three book arts designations are being offered at the University of Utah; two undergraduate programs and a graduate degree in Creative Writing/Book Arts/New Media offered jointly by the Marriott Library and Department of English.

The certificate is open to all students: art majors, non-art majors and even returning post-graduates. It requires the completion of four book arts courses plus two electives. Additional book arts courses can be substituted in place of the electives. The Book Arts Program currently offers Bookbinding I, II, and III; Letterpress I, II, and III; and Artists' Books.

“Nationally, interest in book arts is on the rise, yet options like the certificate are rare in academic institutions, so I think it's an exciting moment for the University of Utah,” says Emily Tipps, book arts studio coordinator and binding instructor. Tipps points out that the new certificate can provide a formalized course of study and transcript designation for the many students who are already seriously pursuing book arts as part of their study.

In addition to classes, the Book Arts Program also provides workshops, lectures and exhibits for members of the community. This year, Mayor Ralph Becker presented the Book Arts Program with the “Service to the Arts by an Organization” award at the Utah Arts Festival.

About the Book Arts Program

The Book Arts Program combines the technical expertise for creating books with the creative aesthetics of fine art. Its goal is to inspire the preservation of the physical book by training students in a fully equipped studio to use letterpress printing, bookbinding, and other techniques to create works of art that are also books. Classes are available to University of Utah students, K-12 students, teachers and community members, as well as to bookbinders, printers, and book artists. In addition to creating artists' books, students tackle the academic question of what constitutes a book and how art plays a role in that discussion. More information about events, exhibits, and the program can be found at <http://www.bookartsprogram.org>.



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