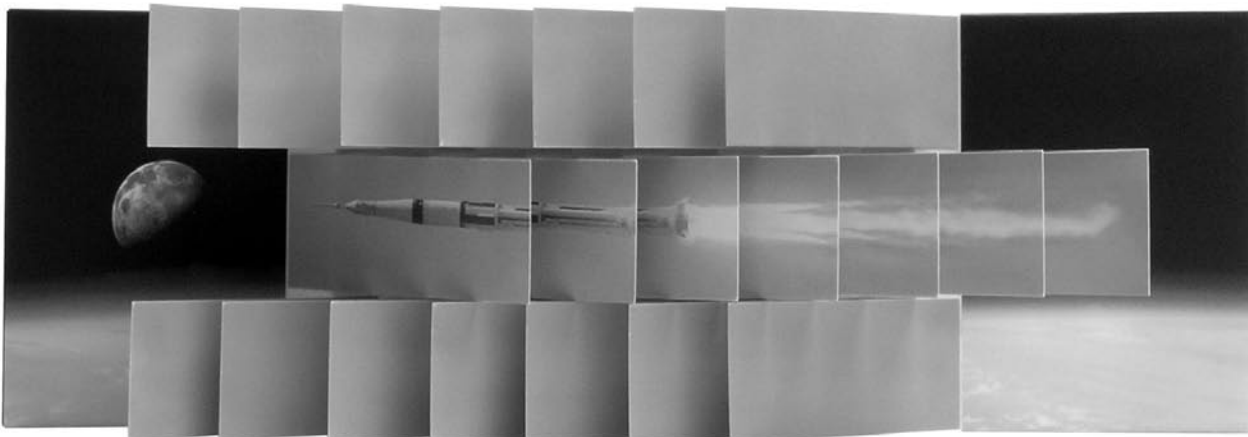
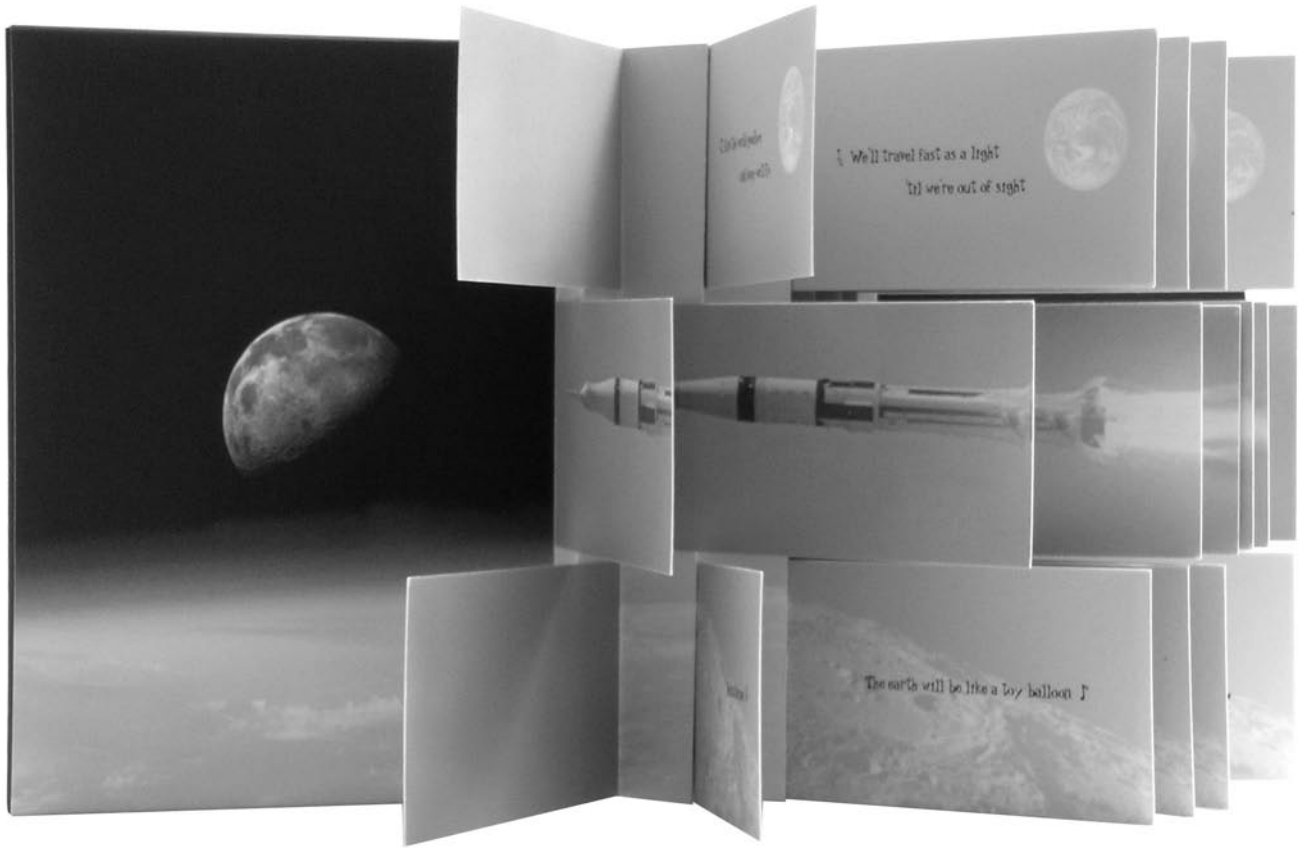


THE BUNFOLDER

an e-journal for the book binder and book artist



Volume 2, Number 1, Fall 2005

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All Shook Up: Interplay of image and text in the flag book structure

By Karen Hanmer

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Figure 1, *All Shook Up*, 1998.

The foundation of the deceptively simple “flag book” structure is an accordion folded spine. Rows of flags attached to opposing sides of each of the spine’s “mountain” folds allow the artist to fragment and layer a number of complementary or contrasting images and narratives. When read page by page, the viewer sees disjointed fragments of image and text. When the spine is pulled fully open, these fragments assemble a panoramic spread. This transformation is accompanied by a delightful flapping sound. The spine and covers provide opportunities for additional imagery.

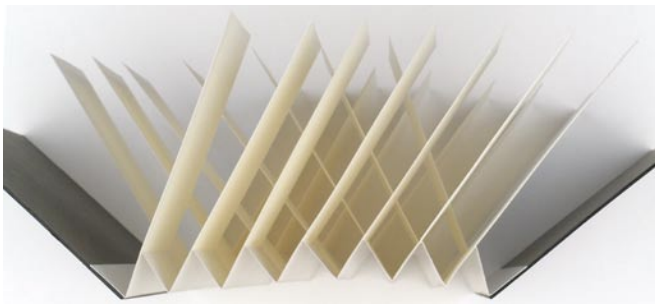


Figure 2, View from above showing page attachment on opposing sides of accordion folded spine.

Philadelphia book artist and conservator Hedi Kyle created the first flag book, *April Diary*, in 1979. I first saw a flag book, Susan King’s 1983 *Women and Cars*, in an introductory artists’ books class at Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts. *Women and Cars* layers autobiographical narrative, vintage photographs, and literary quotes from various sources. I had never seen anything like this simple structure that could function as a traditional codex, a sculpture and a puzzle; that could both reveal and conceal its richly layered content.

My first flag book, *Letter Home* (Figure 3), pairs a family reunion photo with a young Navy wife’s letter written from 1950s Italy to her family on the farm. A second brief narrative details the woman’s reinvention of herself.



Figure 3, *Letter Home*, 1998.

After I had learned to better take advantage of the flag book structure’s many surfaces, I updated *Letter Home* by adding more of the family reunion photo to the inside covers and spine, a photo of the woman in Florence to the outer covers, and a view from her apartment in Naples to the outside of the spine (Figure 4).



Figure 4, *Letter Home (III)*, 2004.

VARIATIONS

This article will present two variations of the flag book structure. For lack of existing terminology I will refer to them as the “stepped” style and the “consolidated” style. The stepped style is the more common, and has been pictured in the Figures above. When the book is pulled fully open, the panoramic image is assembled as a series of overlapping fragments.

In the consolidated style, pictured below in Figure 5, the flag book pulls open to assemble a complete picture with no overlapping.



Figure 5, Consolidated style flag book.

IMAGE CONSIDERATIONS

The rough prototypes below illustrate some of the issues I would consider when creating a new flag book. Figure 6, left, is an archival photograph as I downloaded it from the National Archives website.

Cropping of image

Figure 6, right, is the same image as I will use it, cropped tightly around the Figures. Note that I am splitting the photograph into three rows of flags of unequal height, using an architectural element and the desk as dividing points. I could, but I am not, fragmenting the Figures vertically.



Figure 6, Archival image (left), and image as cropped and separated into rows for use in flag book (right).

Direction of assembly

When I assemble the book, I have a choice of attaching the top and bottom rows of flags to right or the left side of the first mountain fold of the accordion (see Figure 2). The center row will be attached to the opposing side of that fold. This choice can alter the emphasis of the photo. Figure 7, top, focuses on Nixon admiring Elvis’ cufflink. Figure 7, bottom, places more emphasis on the man observing the meeting.



Figure 7, The same image assembled in opposite directions can alter the emphasis of the image.

The direction of motion can also be altered. The Wright Flyer appears to be moving to the left in Figure 8, top, and moving to the right in Figure 8, bottom.

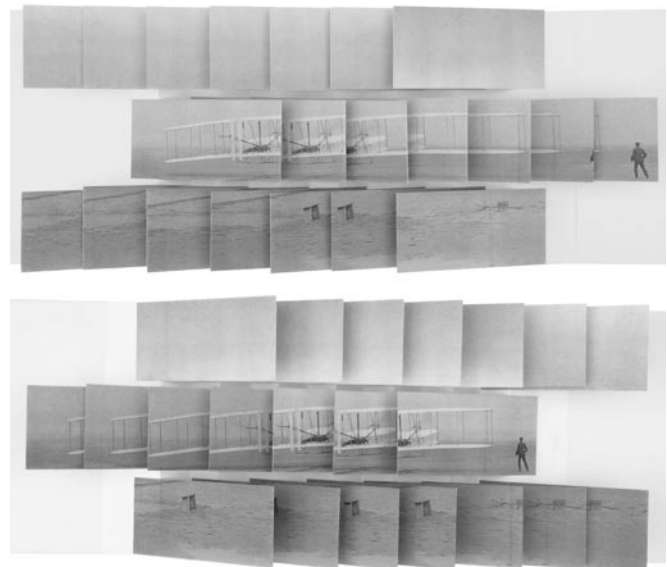


Figure 8, The same image assembled in opposite directions can alter the direction of movement.

Width of spine

A spine with wider accordion segments will open further, giving a broader spread to the panoramic image. But wider accordion segments cover more of the rear of the flag to which they attach, leaving less room for text or image. Compare Figure 9 with its 2 inch wide spine segments to Figure 7 with spine segments only 1 inch wide.



Figure 9, Flag book with wide accordion folded sections, compare to Figure 7 (bottom) with a spine half as wide.

Choice of image

In general, choose an image that conveys motion or emotion, is simple, and is graphically strong. An interesting structure will not save an uninteresting image.

One of my current interests is women aviation pioneers. Their photographs are compelling, and the accomplishments of the women are impressive, but the flag book may not be the best to structure salute them (Figure 10). I experimented with different structures and instead settled on a pop up book for the women aviators. Fragmented faces may work better on an iconic image such as *All Shook Up* (Figure 1).



Figure 10, Fragmented face on unfamiliar image, compare to iconic image in Figure 1.

Which style better fits the image?

This is mainly a matter of personal aesthetics. Experimentation is a good way to become familiar with the structure, and working intensely with any image will always yield ideas for future projects. Figure 11 illustrates the same photograph used in the both the consolidated and stepped styles.



Figure 11, The same image used in consolidated style (top), and stepped style (bottom) flag books.

Sculptural concerns

Flag books need not contain imagery. The structure offers much opportunity for experimentation with shape and color. The model in Figure 12 is an experiment with nesting shapes.



Figure 12, Sculptural possibilities

DIMENSIONS

Select a size that feels appropriate for your content, and has proportions that work with the images you want to use. I sometimes test the size and shape of a prototype for new book with several people to see how comfortably it fits in different sized hands.

The width of the flags should be no wider than the width of the boards, so the flags will be fully concealed inside the covers when the book is closed.

The amount of separation between the rows of flags should be small enough to keep the images somewhat connected, and large enough that the flags will not catch on each other and interfere with pulling the book fully open. A quarter inch separation is a good starting point for the stepped style. An

eighth of an inch gap should be adequate for the consolidated style.

Each page of the flag book requires two folded segments of the accordion, plus two additional segments for attachment to the covers. (Refer again to Figure 2 for an illustration of the flags in relationship to the spine.) One inch wide spine segments are a good starting point. Thus for a typical flag book of seven pages, this would require a 16 inch wide spine.

(2 segments @ 1 inch x 7 pages) + 2 segments for board attachment @ 1 inch = 16 inches

LAYOUT, STEPPED STYLE

I have been using Adobe Photoshop to lay out both my text and image pages. Quark or Adobe InDesign would provide increased control over text formatting.

Image layout

By hand:

When I begin new book, I measure and trim the pages by hand for my first few prototypes.

I print seven copies of the image, and measure and trim the first page to 5 inches wide, then divide the remaining portion of the image into six equal sections, as shown in Figure 13.

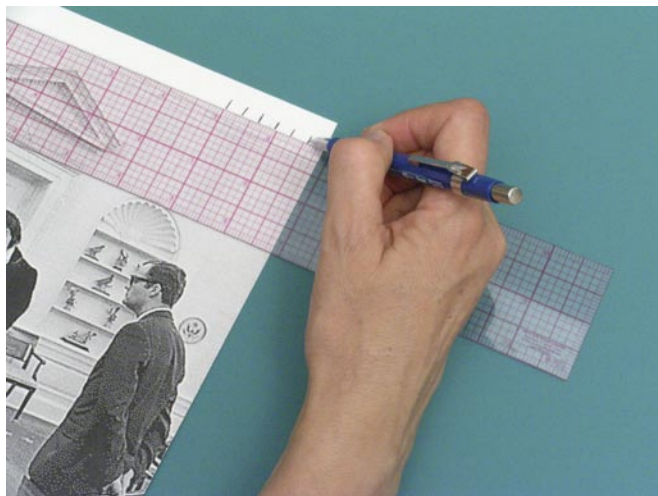


Figure 13, Manually dividing an image into pages.

I will cut each page progressively wider, then take all seven trimmed pages, jog them up to the cut edge (Figure 14) and cut the stack to 5 inches wide.

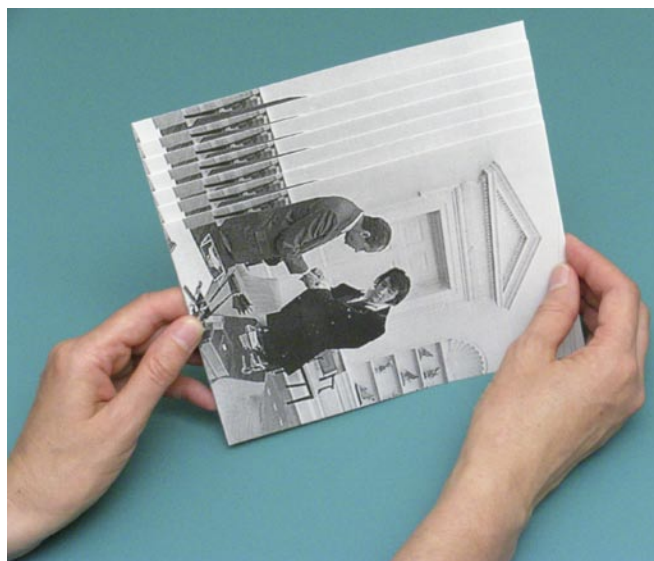


Figure 14, Preparation to trim seven flag book pages to the correct width

Covers and Spine:

The layout of the covers and spine require no special preparation, just size the images as desired. I label the cover pieces "inner" or "outer" and "front" or "rear" to avoid confusion during assembly.

With Photoshop:

The image that creates the panoramic spread when the flag book is pulled completely open can be landscape or portrait format, but the width of the image must be equal to or greater than the width of the book's covers.

First format the image to the correct height. This may require some cropping, stretching or other finessing of the image so that it separates into the desired number of rows of flags without a break at an awkward place. Although three rows is common, a flag book can have more or fewer rows, and the rows need not be of equal height.

For the purposes of this article, assume a book of seven pages, 5 inches wide. Each page will be split into three rows of flags.

Figure 15 is a Photoshop screen shot showing layout for image pages:

Set up horizontal guides (a feature in Photoshop on the "View" menu) to show where each text page will be cut into individual rows of flags.

Now the image must be divided vertically into seven pages, and each page saved as a separate file.

Measuring from the left of the image, make a vertical guide at 5 inches. That first 5 inches of image will become the first page.

Now measure the remaining portion of the image, and divide that into six equal sections. I add an additional vertical guide at each of these breaks. These guides are equivalent to the hand drawn tick marks in Figure 13.

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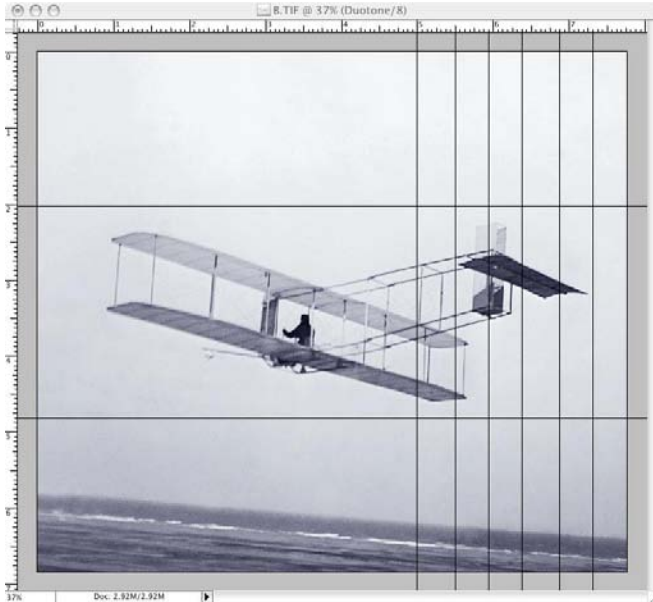


Figure 15, Photoshop file used to create pages for panoramic image, showing horizontal guides for separation into rows of flags and vertical guides to denote right edges for each of seven image pages.

Crop to the first 5 inches and save the file, with the file name “Page1”.

Type “Undo” to revert to the entire image.

To make pages 2-7, march along with the crop tool, measuring a 5 inch wide swath that ends on the right at each successive vertical guide (Figure 16). Crop, rename the file with the successive page number, type “undo” and crop and save again until you have created all seven page files.



Figure 16, Cropping to create a file for image page 4.

Text layout

I begin with pencil and paper, experimenting with how I might edit the text and split each passage across seven pages. Then I lay out both text passages in a table in my text editing program, the two columns representing page spreads in the flag book (Figure 17).

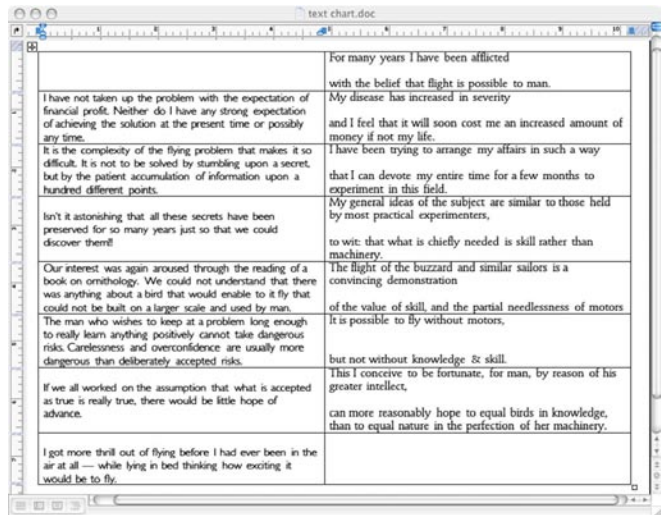


Figure 17, Two text passages laid out in a table to represent page spreads.

Next I begin to feed the text page by page into a Photoshop file. The first page becomes a template for successive text pages, and for future flag book projects of the same dimensions. Figure 18 is a Photoshop screen print of this page file.

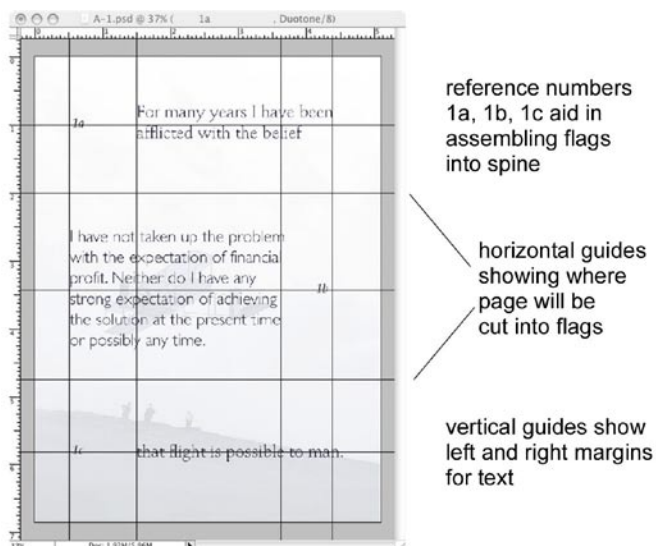


Figure 18, Photoshop file for text pages, showing vertical guides for margins, and horizontal guides for centering text and dividing page into rows of flags.

I create horizontal guides corresponding to the guides on the image pages to show me where each text page will be cut into individual rows of flags. A second set of horizontal guides marks the center point of each flag to further placement of the text.

I add vertical guides to show me the right and left text margins for each flag, keeping in mind that a portion of the imagery on each flag will be obscured in the area where it attaches to the spine.

Reference numbers 1a, 1b, 1c will help me attach the flags to the spine in the right order. Numbers 1-7 will denote pages, letters a-c will denote top, center and bottom rows. Place the reference numbers in the zone that will be covered by the attachment to the spine.

I often add an image on the text side of the flags, with the opacity set low enough that the text is easily legible.

LAYOUT, CONSOLIDATED STYLE

The consolidated style requires only one image page, the width of the spine paper minus its first and last folded segments. These two segments will be used for cover attachments.

Cut this single image page into flags. Each flag should be as wide as two of the spine segments. Figure 19 illustrates these proportions. When laying out text or image for the rear of the flags, keep in mind that half of each flag will be obscured where it attaches to the spine.

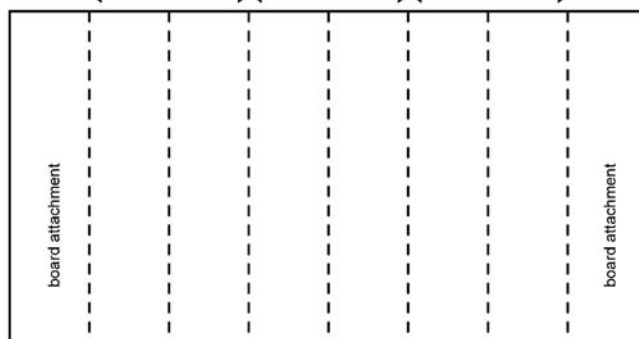
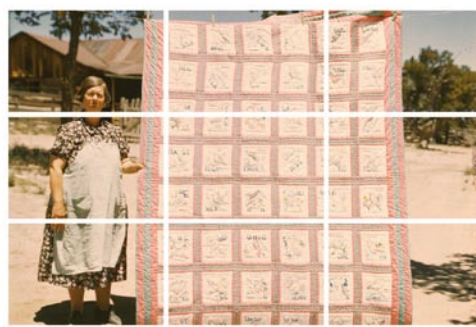


Figure 19, Image layout and flag proportion relative to spine for consolidated style book.

MATERIALS AND TOOLS

For boards I use Dark Grey Pamphlet Board or Grey/White Archival Board from Archival Products. Both are very thin and lightweight, but also very dense and stiff.

The book will open with a much more satisfying snap if the flags are made from heavier stock than the spine. Since I do my printing digitally, I use an inkjet coated paper for the flags, Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Duo 316. It is coated for inkjet on both sides, has a matte finish, and is relatively heavyweight. I use 65 or 80 lb. Mohawk Superfine Cover for the covers and spines. For early prototypes of a new piece, I laser print onto plain cardstock designed to go through a photocopier.

I use Scotch 415 tape to attach the flags to the spine and the spine to the covers. This double stick tape does not cockle the paper as a wet adhesive may, and it is somewhat repositionable if I make an error in assembly. Over time the tape cures to form a very firm bond.

Grain direction of the various components is illustrated in Figure 20. It is essential that the spine be folded with the grain. As in a flip book, the book will snap open more nicely if the grain of the flags runs perpendicular to the spine. As usual, grain on the cover boards is parallel to the spine.

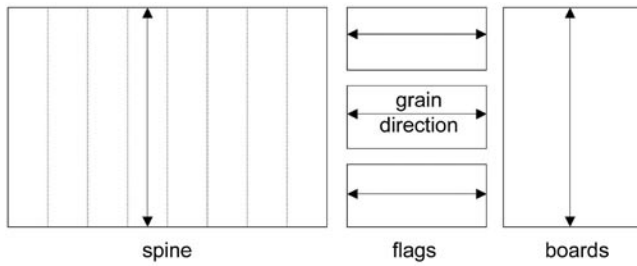


Figure 20, Grain direction for flag book components.

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I prefer a Teflon folder to a bone folder because it is less likely to mar the surface of the paper. I use a C-thru brand ruler, (a clear ruler printed with a red eighth inch grid) because it gives me the choice of measuring in inches, or just counting the number of little boxes printed on the ruler between two given points.

To facilitate neat and consistent assembly of the flags, I have made a jig of a letter-sized scrap of book board. Two guides made of laminated stacks of board 5x2x1/8" are glued to the jig at right angles, providing a square corner for lining up the spine with the flags.



Figure 21, Tools and materials for assembly.

ASSEMBLY

Assembly of both variations of the structure are identical.

Folding the spine

I've chosen a flag book of seven pages for our example because that is the number that can be accommodated by an accordion folded into 16 segments. To assure a tidy spine with folded segments of equal dimensions, do not measure, score, then fold each segment separately. Rather fold the paper in half, and continue to fold those segments in half (see Appendix A: How to Fold an Accordion). This method will yield a spine of 8 or 16 segments, or any number that is a power of two.

Once the spine is folded, reverse all the folds (fold them backwards) and crease again. This additional working of the spine folds will assure a book that opens easily and fully.

Attaching flags to spine

Cut each of your seven image pages into three separate flags, and stack the flags for each row (top, center and bottom) at the edge of your work surface.

Attach double stick tape to the rear (not the panoramic image side) of each flag, but do not yet remove the release paper from the tape (Figure 22).

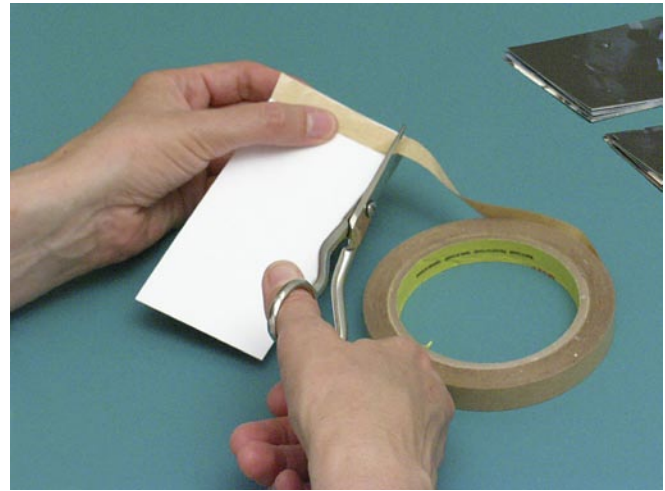


Figure 22, Applying double stick tape to flags. Flags arranged in stacks by row at edge of work surface.

Use the jig to attach flags flush with the head (top) and tail (bottom) of the spine. Flags also may be positioned slightly in from the head and tail. However, if the book is exhibited, the curator (and viewers, if they are permitted) will likely stand the book up resting on its boards, spine and bottom row of flags. There will be less stress on the corners if the bottom row of flags is flush with the bottom of the boards.

Set the spine in your jig square against the two guides as in Figure 23, and working from the top and back of the book (following page) remove the release tape and feed the flags into the spine, squared up against the top guide and the inner fold of the spine. Depending on whether the motion of your book goes from right to left or left to right, you may be placing the flag on the spine image side down, tape side up.

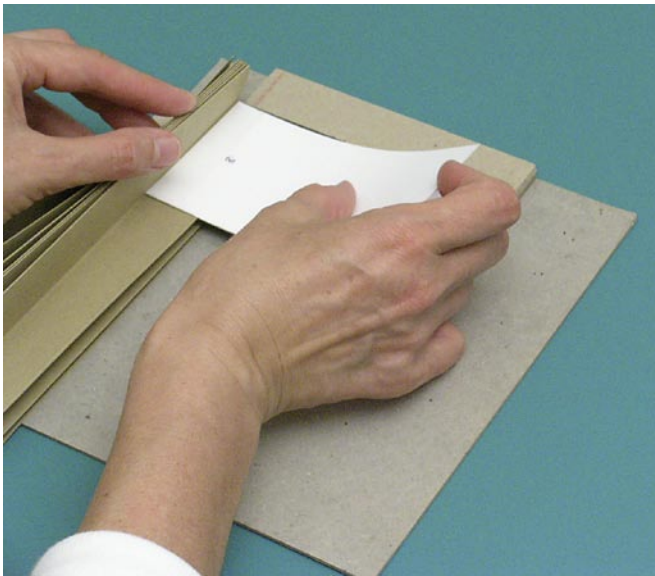


Figure 23, Attaching top row of flags to spine.

Ease the next spine segment into place over the flag and rub with your folder (Figure 24).

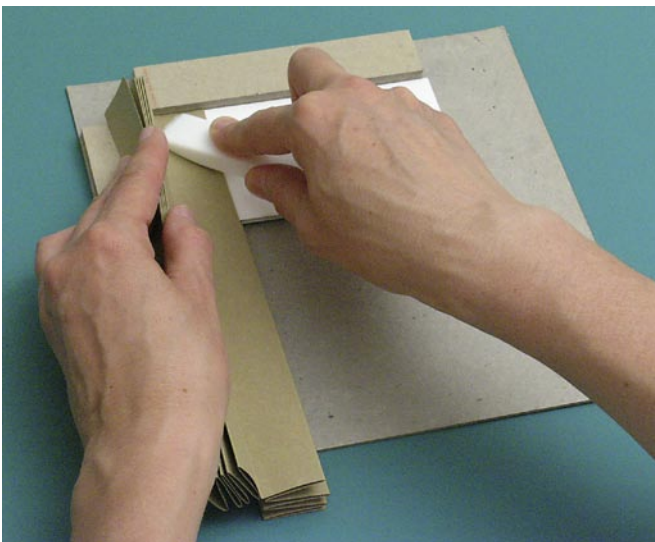


Figure 24

Repeat with remaining pages in the top row, then with the bottom row (Figure 25).

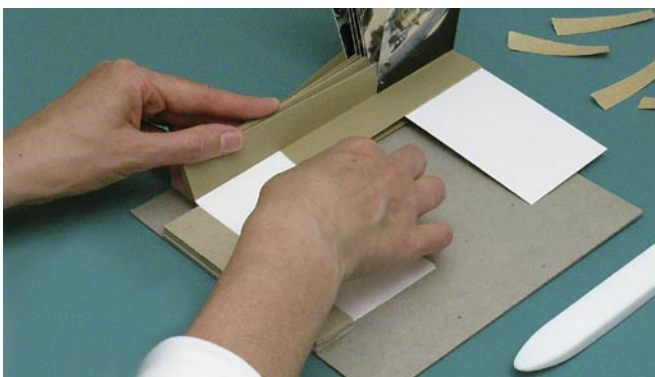


Figure 25, Attaching bottom row of flags to spine.

Finally, set the jig aside and add the center row of flags. Eyeball the position of the first flag, and use it as a guide for placement of subsequent flags (Figure 26).

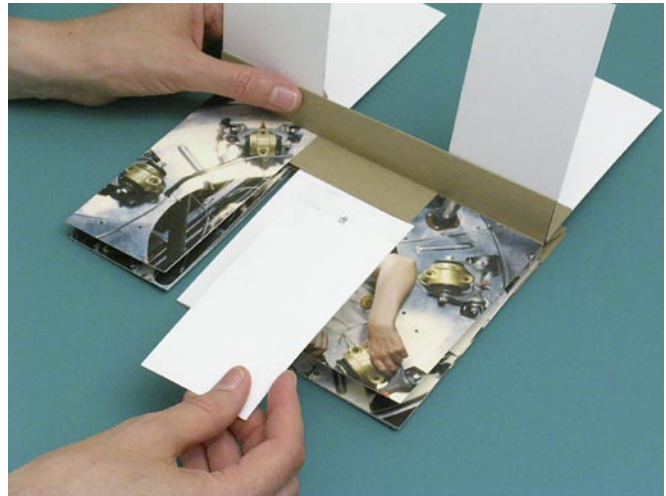


Figure 26, Attaching center row of flags to spine.

Assembling covers

The board covering method I use is also a Hedi Kyle invention.

Cut two boards the desired width by the height of the spine, grain parallel to the spine (Figure 27).

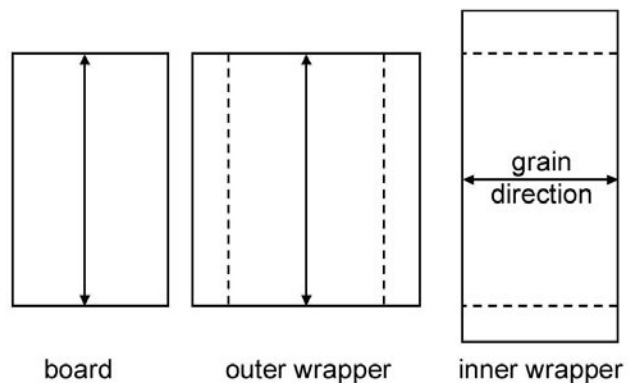


Figure 27, Proper grain direction for cover components.

Cut four paper covers to the following dimensions:

The two inner wrappers should equal the width of the boards x the height plus 3 inches, grain direction parallel to the width of the board.

The two outer wrappers should equal the height of the boards x the width plus 3 inches, grain direction parallel to the height of the board.



The Bonefolder: an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist

Center a board inside one of the wrappers (Figure 28).

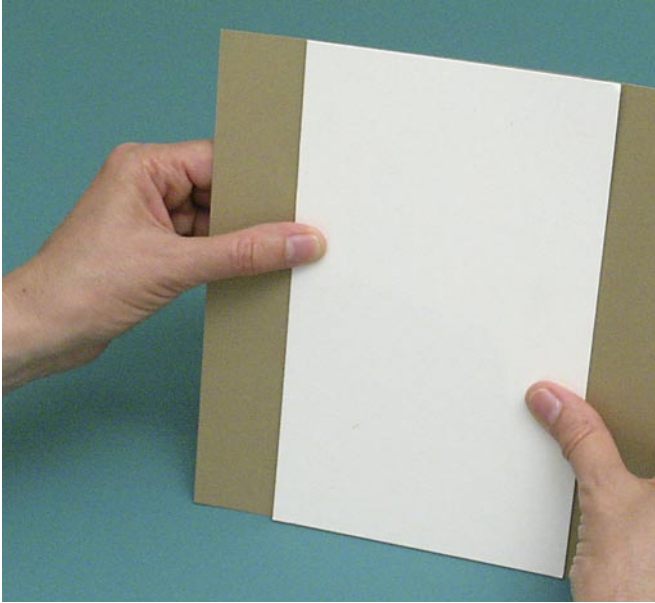


Figure 28, Centering board in outer wrapper.

Holding the paper and board firmly down on the bench, wrap one flap up and over the edge of the board and rub the edge, then the top surface with your folder (Figure 29).

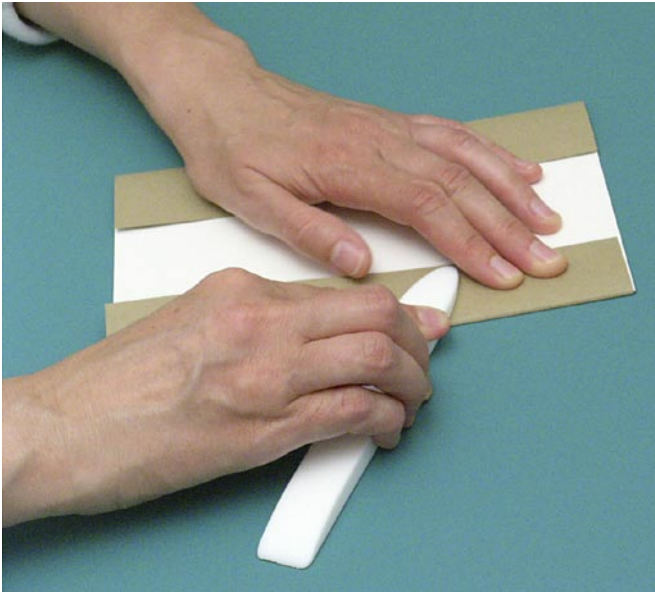


Figure 29, Folding outer wrapper up and over the edge of the board.

Repeat with other flap.

Remove wrapper from board and set aside. Repeat procedure with remaining three wrappers.

Replace the outer wrapper around the board. Tuck one flap of the inner wrapper between the outer wrapper and the board, and position it around the uncovered side of the board (Figure 30).

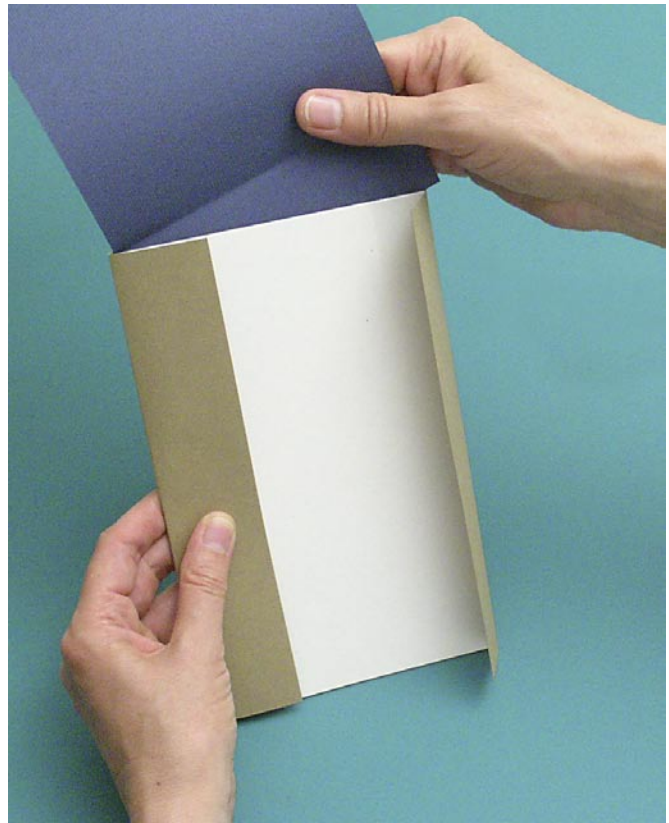


Figure 30, Flap of inner wrapper is inserted between outer wrapper and board.

Tuck in the other flap snugly (Figure 31). Trimming the corners of the flap at a diagonal will ease insertion.

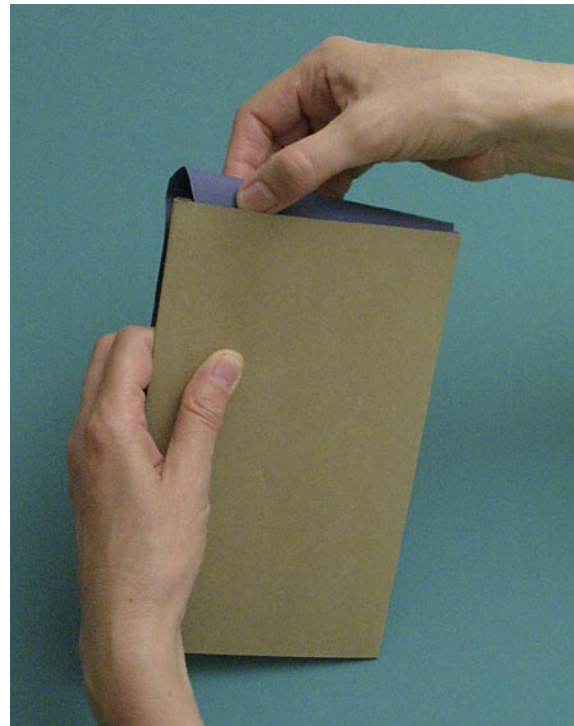


Figure 31, Outer wrapper covers front of board, inner wrapper covers rear of board.

Repeat with other board. **Attaching spine to the covers** APPENDIX A

Attach a strip of double stick tape along the first and last segments of the spine, and remove enough release paper to fold a short tab towards the flags (Figure 32).



Figure 32, Folding back tab of double stick tape release paper in preparation for insertion of spine into cover.

Tuck the spine into the cover, carefully remove the release paper while firmly holding the cover and spine in place (Figure 33), and rub with a folder.



Figure 33, Removing release paper from double stick after insertion of spine into cover.

Leaf through your completed book, then enjoy the delightful flapping sound as you pull it fully open. Admire your craft and content and begin to plan your next book.

How to fold an accordion

For a very precisely folded spine, do not measure, score, then fold each segment separately. This is likely to result in accordion segments of unequal width. Instead fold the spine paper in half, and continue to fold each resulting section in half again until you have the desired number of sections.

1. Take the page and fold it in half, with the grain, making sure that the top, bottom, and side edges all line up directly on top of each other (Figure 34). Crease the fold with your folder.

You will refer to this initial fold with each subsequent fold.

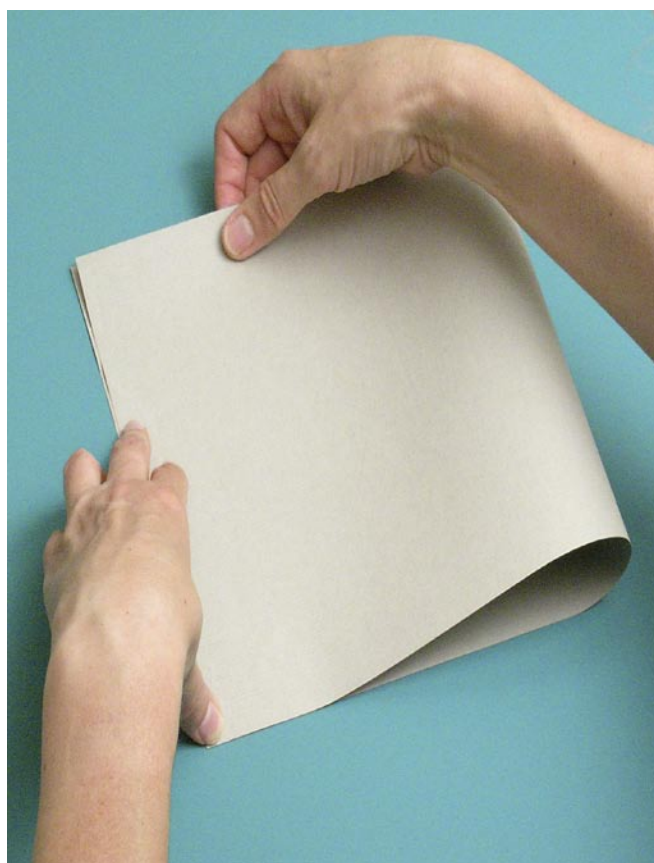


Figure 34, Making the initial fold.

I am right handed. At this point, I orient the paper so that the initial fold is on the left. I will keep the initial fold to the left for the remainder of the process.

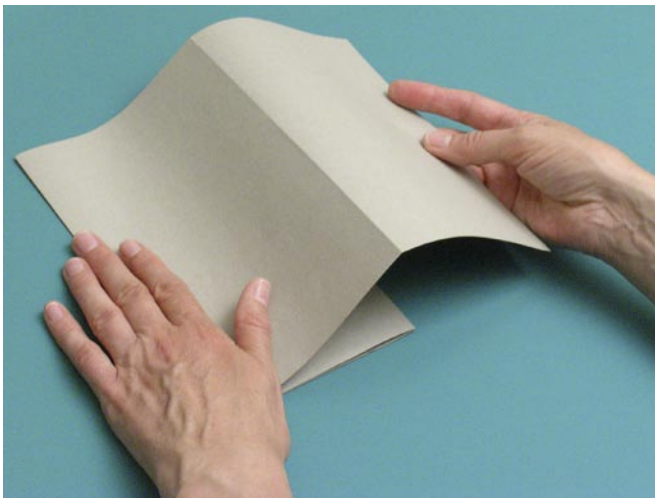
2. Fold the page once more, taking the top flap over to the initial fold, again lining up all three edges (Figure 35). Again use your folder to emphasize the fold.



Figure 35, Folding the top section to the initial fold.

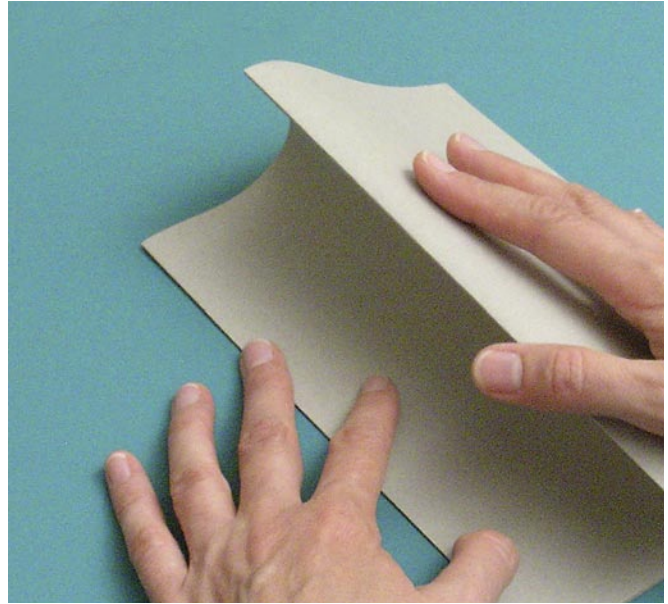
3. Turn the page over and repeat. You will now have a spine folded into four equal segments

4. Now reverse the top fold (the fold between the first and second spine segments) by turning it inside out (Figures 36-37).



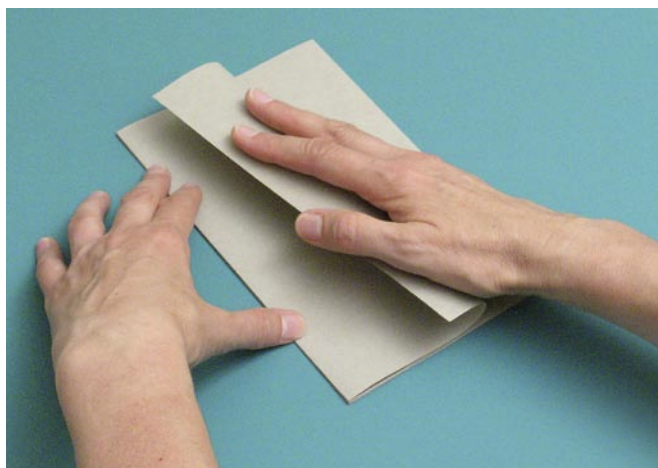
Figures 36-37, Reversing the top fold.

5. Line up this reversed fold directly above your initial fold and crease (Figures 38-39).



Figures 38-39, Bringing the reversed fold to directly above the initial fold.

6. Take the cut edge, line it up above the initial fold and crease (Figures 40-41). Your spine will now be folded into four small and two large segments.



Figures 40-41, Folding the final sections of the accordion prior to flipping it over to continue.

7. Turn the spine over, with the initial fold still facing left, and repeat steps 4-6.

8. You will now have a spine with eight equal segments. To fold your spine into 16 segments, repeat steps 4-7, always beginning with the next fold up from the initial fold, and working your way to the top of the stack.

If the spine paper is very stiff, or when precision folding is crucial, I square up the spine paper in the bed of my Kuttrimmer and do the folding there (Figure 42).



Figure 42, Using the bed of a Kuttrimmer as guide for precise folding.

APPENDIX B:

Resources

Supplies

Dark Grey Pamphlet Board and Grey/White Archival Board are available from Archival Products in Iowa, <<http://www.archival.com>>.

Scotch 415 tape is available in several widths from Talas. Talas also carries Teflon folders. <<http://www.talasonline.com>>

My source for Mohawk Superfine Cover is Dolphin Paper (877-868-0002).

My source for Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Duo inkjet paper is Digital Art Supplies, <<http://www.digitalartsupplies.com>>.

Flag Book examples

The first flag book, Hedi Kyle's *April Diary* is pictured online at <<http://www.minsky.com/images/kyle-1.jpg>>.

PDFs of two flag books, Susan King's *Women and Cars* and Ann Lovett's *Relation*, are accessible online by searching the archive of Women's Studio Workshop <http://www.wsworkshop.org/_art_book/ab_archive.htm>. *Relation* is still in print, and is available via this website.

Julie Chen's letterpress printed *Listening* has only two rows of flags and the text appears only on the spine: <http://www.flyingfishpress.com/gallery_listening.html>

Emily Martin's *Away* is a consolidated style flag book: <<http://www.lucidplanet.com/IWA/FeaturedArchive/MartinE/EMaAway.htm>>

Women and Cars and other classic artists' books are discussed in detail in:

Renee R. Hubert and Judd D. Hubert (1998). *The Cutting Edge of Reading: Artists' Books*, New York, NY: Granary Books.

The Oregon Book Arts Guild held a flag book exhibition in 2002. The catalog is a flag book, and has small color photos of the more than 50 flag books in the show. Catalogs are still available for \$10 from Patricia Grass, 1928 21st Ave., Forest Grove, OR 97116.

More of Karen Hanmer's flag books are pictured online at <<http://www.karenhanmer.com/flag/FlagP1.html>>

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Chicago artist Karen Hanmer's sculptural books and installations fragment and layer text and image to mirror the experience of personal and cultural memory. Her books are meant to be handled; the intimate scale, choice of materials, and posture and gesture required to view each piece evoke the experience of looking through a photo album, diary, or the belongings of a loved one. However, her works often take playful forms, and many include tongue-in-cheek text.

She exhibits widely, and her work is included in collections ranging from Tate Britain and the Denver Public Library to Syracuse University and Graceland. She lectures and teaches workshops on book arts and digital printing. Hanmer holds a degree in Economics from Northwestern University and studies traditional binding with Scott Kellar. She is an officer of Chicago Hand Bookbinders and the Guild of Bookworkers, Midwest Chapter. A complete catalog of her work is available online at <<http://www.karenhanmer.com>>. She can be reached at <karen@karenhanmer.com>.

