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A Selection of Artists' Books from Murray Library's Special Collections

Murray Library

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SOUTHBOUND ON US 15: Travel approximately three miles beyond the Pennsylvania Turnpike interchange to the Lisburn Road exit. Turn left at the end of the exit ramp. Turn right onto Grantham Road. At the entrance to the campus, turn right onto College Avenue and continue past Boyer Hall and Hostetter Chapel to the library parking lot.

NORTHBOUND ON US 15: Travel approximately four miles beyond the PA 74 North intersection near Dillsburg to the Lisburn Road exit. Turn right at the end of the exit ramp. Turn right onto Grantham Road. At the entrance to the campus, turn right onto College Avenue and continue past Boyer Hall and Hostetter Chapel to the library parking lot.

Parking is located in the rear or front entrance of the library

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- Sunday, 2:00 P.M.-12:00 Midnight

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- Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.
- Closed Weekends

One College Avenue
Grantham, PA 17027
717.691.6006

MURRAY LIBRARY
The Time/Life Series, Jody Williams, 1997
Tunnel Map (left), Carol June Barton, 1988; Interior view (right)
Nature Abhors, Philip Zimmerman, 2003
Otherspace: Martian Topography, Johanna Drucker & Brad Freeman, 1992
A Hundred Years of: LEX FLEX, Ruth Laxson, 2003
Reading Dick and Jane with Me, Clarissa T. Sligh, 1989

Cover: What's Happening with Momma?, Clarissa T. Sligh, 1988. Sligh’s dimensional, house-shaped book literally unfolds to tell a story from the artist's childhood. In reflecting on her family experiences, Sligh adopts “the eye, the language, the texts and formal 'naivety' of childhood.”

FRIENDS OF MURRAY LIBRARY
ARTISTS’ BOOKS
MURRAY LIBRARY’S SPECIAL COLLECTION

Designed by Amy Chow and Emily Pratt, Publication Portfolio Class, 2010
What Are Artists' Books?

Artists' books are an art form that began with scrolls, concertinas, and flag books, but they have evolved with new media, techniques, and concepts. Many of the artists' books in Murray Library's special collection are the work of well-known book artists who have exhibited at universities, libraries, galleries, and museums throughout the world, including works by Messiah College art faculty and students.

Friends of Murray Library and the Department of Visual Arts fund new acquisitions to the collection each year, enhancing its use as an interdisciplinary teaching resource. We invite you to get acquainted with the artists' books at Murray Library. A selection is always on display and the entire collection is available for viewing. Just ask a librarian for access!

Visually exciting and intellectually provocative, artists' books push to the outermost limits our assumed definition of what a book is, and turn the practice of reading into a novel experience. Artists' books are, simply, a hybrid art form in which books and art intersect. From scrolls, concertinas, and flag books to pop-ups, collages, and fans, artists' books are a form of visual storytelling that draws upon the traditions of graphic design and multimedia to create an expanded text in which the images extend the written word.

Visually engaging and challenging, the artist's book is the quintessential 20th-century artform. Artists' books are made by designers, writers, and artists, and can be seen as the reservoir for contemporary art. They are a response to the world around us, and the way we think about it. Artists' books can be seen as a window into the mind of the artist, and a way to understand the way they see the world.

From scrolls, concertinas, and flag books, to pop-ups, volvelles, and fans—formats and structures run the gamut. The materials used are equally varied, ranging from natural vellum and handmade paper to such unexpected objects and substances as wood, textiles, beads, metal, feathers, silk, and stone.

Acting as designer, producer, and publisher, the book artist chooses not only the materials from which the book will be constructed, but also determines the layout as well as the interaction of the structure with the content. Women, especially, have taken the lead in the field of artists' books; although all book artists delight in the egalitarian prospects of multiples and production processes that do not rely on publishing hierarchies.

Book artists draw from personal history, literature, music, theater, wonders of the natural world, even dreams. Their works respond to human misery, to dramatic events which have shaped our era, to the vicissitudes of love. They may also be inspired by controversial political and social issues.

Artists' books may adopt any or all forms of contemporary art—painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, design and digital media, installation, performance art (film and video)—as well as all forms of craft, including fiber art, bookbinding, calligraphy, papermaking, typography. Some artists' books are rare and costly one-of-a-kind objects; others, such as those made by activist artists, are inexpensively produced to communicate their message to a wide audience. The nature of artists' books is ever-changing—constantly influenced by new media, techniques, and concepts.

In many ways it could be argued that the artist's book is the quintessential 20th-century artform.” —Johanna Drucker, native Pennsylvanian and internationally recognized book artist.