

WORDS

Along with images, the other elements that can carry a book's content are words. In many books, text is the primary vehicle for conveying the message; there may be no images, or they may simply illustrate the text. Conversely, in many artist books, images may carry the message, and there may be little or no text. Where there is a combination of text and image, the ways in which they may be combined are infinite.

In this section, we look at what you are trying to say with your words, and how you are saying it visually. Your words may be something you compose or something you find, including phrases, essays, narratives, stories or poems.

Words may take your reader on an external or internal journey, record your dreams and aspirations, provide healing and insight, serve as a confessional or

a chronicle for future generations or be a catalyst for creative expression. You may use techniques like free-association, automatic writing or list making. What you choose to say will, in most cases, determine how you choose to say it.

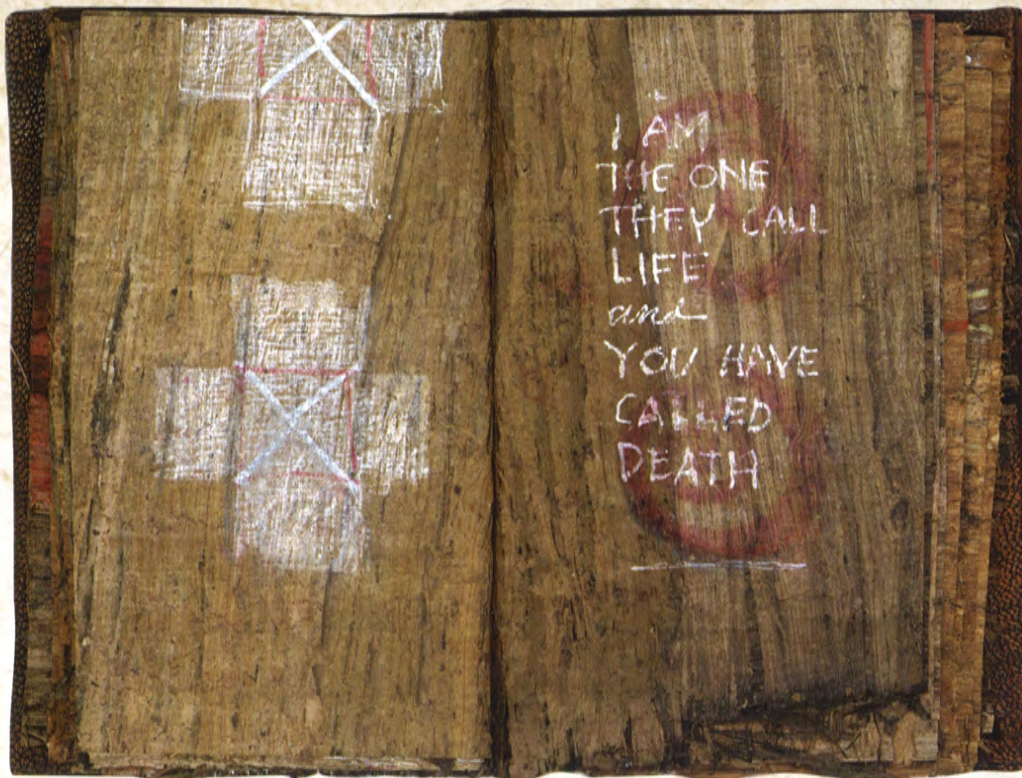
Because what I'm trying to say is frequently being defined in the process of making the book, my words are often incorporated in a fragmented, broken style using different typefaces, sizes and methods of application, including found text, writing, transfers, stencils, rubber stamps and computer prints. In Vietnam, I bought a rubber-stamp alphabet, taped together into a small

rectangle with the letters out of order and upside down, and a red stamp pad. The alphabet has become a recurring motif in many of my books, symbolizing for me our difficulties in understanding one another.



Copper, 2000, 88 pages, 8 1/2" x 7 1/4" (22cm x 18cm) mixed-media collage

This was a handwritten, collaged journal that recorded whatever I chose to incorporate into it during the course of a year. It included the inane and the insignificant and wasn't intended for others to view or read. On the pages shown, my writing follows the lines of suminagashi marbling on brown kraft paper torn from a bag, while the opposite page incorporates a "perishable" rubber stamp, bottle label and fragment of corrugated cardboard.



Nag Hammadi, 2006, 72 pages, 5" x 3" (13cm x 8cm) acrylic paste paint, collagraph prints and collage on mud papyrus

The text in this piece came from a narrative poem in one of the thirteen single quire codices, or manuscripts, dating from the fourth century, found in 1945 near the Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi, buried in an earthen jar. It was an appropriate text since the book was a quarter-scale replica of one of the manuscripts. Written in the voice of a woman, it seeks to unite opposites. Throughout the book, I've combined imagery with passages from the text, written and printed in black, white, gold and silver ink.



many truths 2004 2 pages 4³/₄" x 10¹/₂" x 5¹/₄" (12cm x 27cm x 13cm) wooden bookstand and metal book with printed paper inset coated with encaustic

The simple text used here references the multiplicity of religious beliefs in India, where the wooden bookstand and hinged metal "book" were both found. The inside of the metal was measured and, in Photoshop, fonts were used against a black background to appear as if the "one" in the original text, "one truth," had been roughly crossed out with red and "truth" made plural with the addition of the word "many" and an "s." The two pieces, printed on paper, were glued into the metal and coated with encaustic to tie them physically and visually to the book form.

Writing, Type and Found Text

Calligraphy often merges written word with image. But unless you have mastered this art form, varying your handwriting may be a preferable way of adding text. Consider elongating your cursive writing with extended connectors between letters, making each letter extremely tall or extremely small, or turning your paper so that you are writing on the vertical, the diagonal or around objects. You can vary the look of these techniques by your choice of writing implement. You can choose pencil, colored pencil, marker, pen or brush and ink or paint, ruling pen, pastel or crayon. Or improvise a tool from a quill, stick, piece of cardboard or whatever you think may work. Vary the size of the implement's tip and change colors—even within words—to create variety and special effects. You can fill the spaces around and within letters with color, or, if you are writing with wax crayon, you can paint over the letters to add color. You can also write into thick, wet surfaces like acrylic paste paint, gel medium or gesso, using a paint eraser, stick

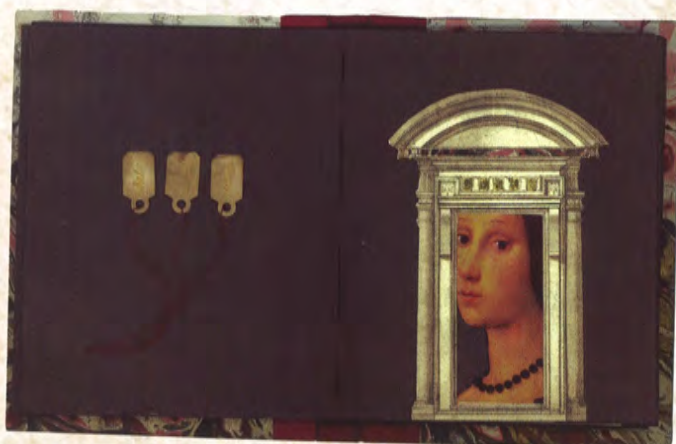
or other implement. Writing may also be incised into encaustic works.

Letterpress, a printing technique that transfers ink by pressing raised type onto paper, is the most elegant and distinctive way of putting text on a page, especially in the hands of a printer who loves type and is attuned to the nuances of leading and kerning. For those of us without access to a letterpress or acute sensitivities, there are alternatives that, depending on your aesthetic, may even be preferable. Rubber stamping, embossing, transferring, stenciling and using rub-on letters are some of the ways to add type. If your pages are unbound, the computer and printer are another alternative. There are thousands of computer fonts available online, ranging from elegant and classic to distressed and degraded



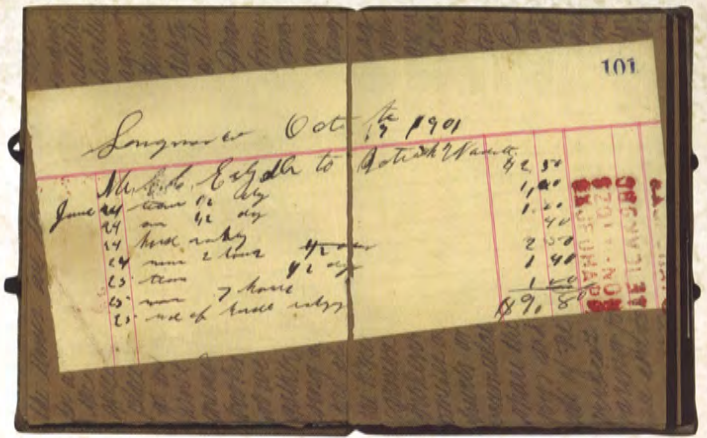
to period-appropriate handwriting. Many are free or relatively inexpensive.

Found text can include virtually any words on virtually any surface, and it can be used as content or as a graphic element.



Labeling Women, 2005, 40 pages, 6" x 5" (15cm x 13cm) mixed-media collage covered with marbled paper and silk spine

Women from Roman art are glimpsed through window and door frames cut from a piece of decorative paper and "labeled," correctly and incorrectly, with terms used to refer to women, including sister, mother, mistress and dame.



One Life, 2003, 43 pages, 5 1/4" x 4 1/2" (15cm x 11cm) glass photographic plate on cloth keyhole binding, paper, collage

The book *One Life* began with a collection of turn-of-the-century letters and documents found at a flea market—all related to James Ward of Longmeadow, Massachusetts. Black and brown papers were chosen as backgrounds for the collaged pages. (See the cover on page 109.)



Cuba: History Rewritten, 2001, 53 pages, 6 1/4" x 6 1/4" (16cm x 16cm) mixed-media collage recovered in brown paper with expanded black cloth spine and hand fishing line

In Cuba, I found a history book published in Havana in 1925, prior to Castro. I began to focus on the differing perspectives authors bring to their accounts, and how time and political persuasion affect, counteract and obliterate viewpoints. The pages from this and other books and periodicals, Communist manifestoes, published letters, State Department brochures, poems and newspaper clippings became the primary components in my journal. This palimpsest—written, drawn, erased, crossed out and reworked repeatedly with remnants of erasures still visible—became *Cuba: History Rewritten*.

Creative Explorations

- Look at various placements of words and images on your pages. Consider how the size, shape and relationship between them affect your concept.
- Make writing implements from knitting needles, chopsticks, skewers and twigs.
- Consider unconventional materials for your writing, like roofing tar and amber shellac.
- Explore a form of "automatic" writing in which you write a stream-of-consciousness flow of words related to your content, combined with letter-like forms that don't make words but carry the flow.
- Make a collection of free and inexpensive fonts from online sources.

Transferring Text

Materials

Paper or book as receiver

Black-and-white fresh toner photocopy of horizontally flipped type

Citra-solv (a natural all-purpose cleaner found in hardware and health food stores)

Q-tips

Paper towels

Spray bottle

Safe-release masking tape or repositionable tape

Folder

Chopping mat or other nonabsorbent hard surface

Optional: digital files of images, scanner, computer, imaging software, printer, white paper for carrier sheet if needed

It's often useful to be able to transfer text into your books. If black text is adequate, this method, requiring only a copy machine and a solvent, provides a simple means. If you want to carefully plan the placement of your text, scan the page into Photoshop and place the type in a separate layer over the scanned page to determine where it best fits. You can change the typeface, size and weight until you decide what is most satisfactory. When the layout of text on each page is complete, you can select the text and place it onto its own page, either alone or combined with groups of text. Then flip the text page horizontally (so it will read correctly after the transfer), print and photocopy with a toner copier. To emphasize some of the text in *Apologia* (see pages 50-51), I followed these steps.

Respectability: Its Rise and Remedy

The very first form of property was the ownership of women. The Romans captured the Sabine women, because that was the regulation thing to do. Our pity need not be wasted upon the women—they simply exchanged owners—they were slaves in either case.

Males were not at first made slaves, because it was inconvenient—there was danger of uprisings; it caused discontent among the slave women, and for a man there was no market while a woman was in demand. She was valuable: first, as a wife, and second, as a worker.

There are animals where the lordly male holds a dozen or more females captive, but it was man who first set his females at work. Darwin says there is no doubt that marriage was at first a matter of coercion and purely a property right. Certain ceremonies even now go with the transfer of real estate and most other property, and the marriage ceremonial was, in the beginning, a public notification of ownership and a warning to all parties to keep hands off. The husband had the power of life or death over the wife and her children. She, being a slave, performed all the menial tasks—she was the worker. And the product of

her labor belonged to her lord. Thus we get the genesis of property:

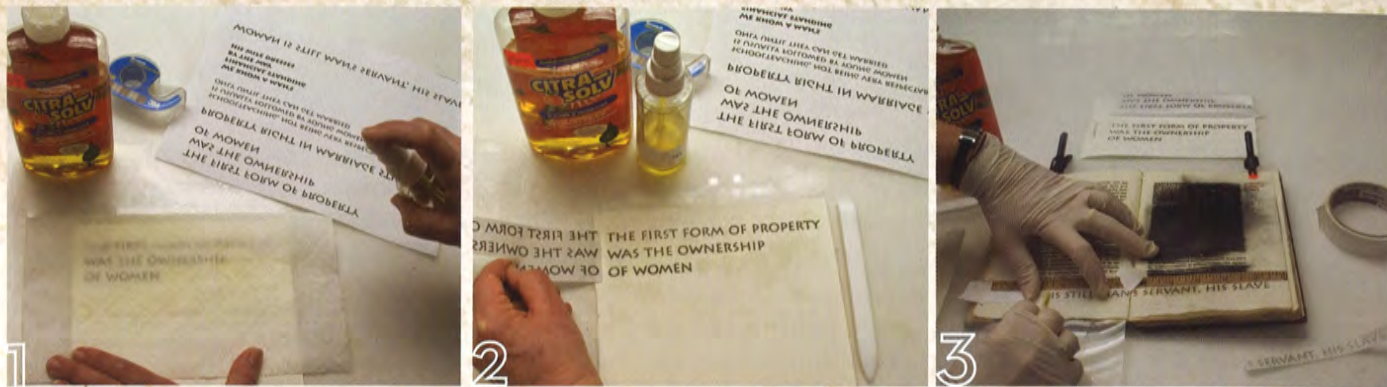
First, the man owned the woman.

Second, he owned all that she produced. The man produced nothing—he was the protector. To be sure, he killed animals, but he did not deign to skin them nor prepare the flesh for food—woman did all this. For him to work would have been undignified and disgraceful—only slaves worked. And so to prove his prowess, his true greatness, he never did a thing but kill and consume.

He was looked up to and revered—that is to say, he took good care never to put his responsibility for property on the women. He married his daughters, which do not even in the most advanced societies. This of course is a very old custom, especially show the women as a class. And we all know that a useful thing for a gentleman may even be done by a gentleman.

Respectability: Its Rise and Remedy





1. When you have cut the text piece you want to transfer from the fresh toner copy, there are two ways to apply Citra-solv: you can dip a Q-tip into the solution, blot lightly on a paper towel and dampen the text area, or you can cover the text with a piece of paper towel and spritz it lightly.
2. Place a nonabsorbent surface, like a flexible chopping mat or silicone craft mat, under the page to protect the pages below from migrating solvent. Tape the dampened text on the appro-

appropriate page using a safe-release or repositionable tape. With a folder, burnish with heavy, even pressure in one direction. The transfer process is easy on some papers, like hot press, and is less perfect on other papers, such as those with a texture.

3. On paper that has texture, like the handmade paper in *Apologia*, transfers are a bit more unpredictable, but that imperfect look may be desired and is often appropriate, depending on your subject.

Helpful Hints

- Inkjet prints onto Lazertran waterslide decals work well on many surfaces. A transfer to a metal case is shown on pages 134-135.
- If you use waterslide decals to transfer text into your book, Citra-solv can be used to dissolve the decal edges, giving the appearance of integration with the surface.
- Text printed on sheer silk tissue can often be made to meld into the book page by coating with acrylic medium or encaustic.
- Rub-on or vinyl letters in a variety of fonts can be bought in sheets and easily transferred to other surfaces by rubbing gently. Since each letter is separate, you must align them carefully.
- Explore some of the many other inkjet transfer techniques discussed on the Internet. In one, the image is printed on paper, the surface of the image and the receiver sheet are coated with acrylic medium and the image is placed facedown on the receiver encapsulating the image between layers of medium and gluing the two sheets of paper together. To expose the image, the back of the carrier paper is wet and carefully removed by rubbing.
- Text from several pages can be combined onto one page for printing. Just be sure to flip the file horizontally before printing.
- Text printed with light colors or in a lightweight or small sized typeface may be difficult to read when transferred. Keep your choice of font relatively large, heavy and dark—it will be more legible and parts that break or don't transfer well will be less of a problem.



Two simple transfer techniques, which can be done with colored text, are inkjet-printed Lazertran waterslide decals (see pages 134-135) and gel-medium transfers.



Placing Text

Materials

Paper, sheet to be folded into double page spread

Text

Image

Pencil

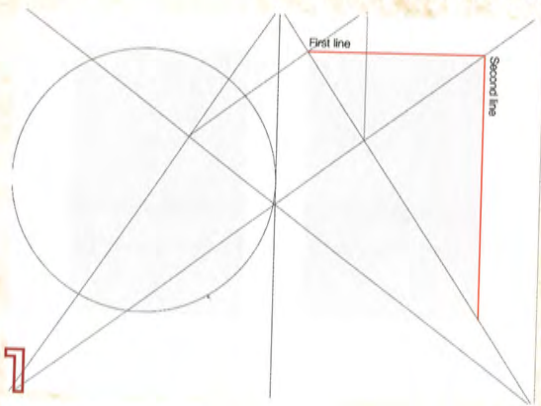
Ruler

When deciding where to place your text on the page, you could use the same judgment you apply to other aesthetic elements and components, or follow a common contemporary convention that on each page the gutter and bottom margin will be slightly wider than the top and side margins. Or you could use an approximation of the golden section, a ratio found in medieval manuscripts. In this demonstration, we'll use the golden section to place text and, if you choose, to place images as well.

One of the classic page proportion guides for the placement of text is the Van de Graaf canon. The proportions

vary with page size, but this adapted illustration works with book pages with a 2:3 ratio, such as 5" × 7½" (13cm × 19cm) ($2\frac{1}{2} \times 2 = 5$ and $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3 = 7\frac{1}{2}$). The margins on the pages are proportional, 2:3:4:6 (inner:top:outer:bottom)—based on $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) increments. So the inside margin is $\frac{1}{2}$ " (13mm), the top margin $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm), the outside margin 1" (25mm) and the bottom margin $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (38mm). The height of the text area is equal to the page width.

Because I'm primarily a visual person and have difficulty with mathematical ratios, I prefer to draw a diagram that works with all sizes and shapes of paper.



1. Using this illustration, make a sample or fold your sheet of paper into two pages and lightly draw all of the black guidelines, except the circle. The first line defining your placement rectangle should be drawn parallel to the top edge from the V point on the upper right-hand page to the outer diagonal. Your second line will be parallel to the side edge until it reaches the next guideline. With these two lines, you can complete the placement of the golden section.

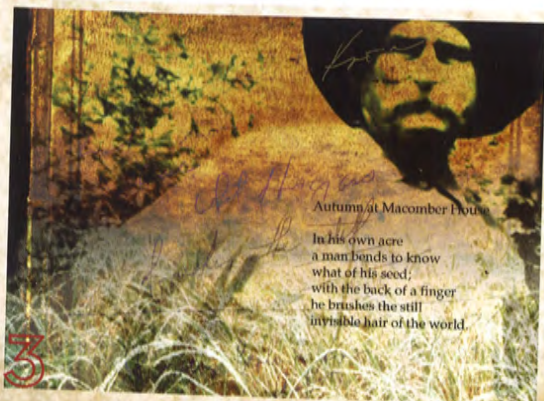


Autumn at Macomber House

In his own acre
a man bends to know
what of his seed;
with the back of a finger
he brushes the still
invisible hair of the world.

2. Select your text and, if you wish, an image. The image I've chosen, *In His Own Acre*, uses a scan from a handwritten draft of the poem "Autumn at Macomber House" by Ray Amorosi, a photograph of my grandfather and a photograph of marsh grasses. Place your text and image into the golden sections. As I placed my components, I realized that my text was too brief to occupy the space well, and that my image was considerably wider than these ideal proportions. (The area extending beyond the section is grayed out.)

2



3. Consider alternatives. I can use this layout if I crop my image to the proportions of the section or change the proportions to suit the image and text. Alternatively, I can cover the page with a larger cropped image and can use the right, left or both sections as guides for the placement of the text. I find this option less restrictive and more in keeping with my aesthetic choices.

Creative Explorations

- Explore various brands of water-soluble printmaking inks. The viscosity varies from brand to brand and even from color to color within brands. You can mix brands and also tone ink colors with tube watercolors or gouache.
- Use multiple colors of ink like paint and draw with tools into the surface of the ink, using brushes, feathers, stencils, rubber stamps or string.
- Experiment with a variety of papers and fabrics in different colors, textures and weights. Smooth papers and tightly woven fabrics tend to work best.
- Since light-colored printmaking inks are opaque, experiment with using them over dark papers or papers with patterns. Try white, silver and gold over inkjet prints.
- If you're not happy with a print, build up the surfaces. Use it as a layer and print on top of it with another ink color or another image.
- Cut a gelatin plate into shapes, separating them slightly to create interesting edges.
- Make a freeform gelatin plate by rolling a rope of clay and pressing it onto a glass sheet to form a complete frame or well. Pour the warm gelatin into the well and when it is solid, remove the clay rope. This alternative creates interesting edges and is easy to handle because you don't have to unmold the gelatin.
- Group together papers and other surfaces that may work for a particular concept you want to explore. Just the process of making material choices sometimes triggers new ideas. Consider including materials like corrugated cardboard, metal foil and wrapping paper. Some of the surfaces will work as pages, covers or collage materials and some can even be used for all three.



BOOK+ *Art*

Handcrafting Artists' Books

Dorothy Simpson Krause

