

### What is an Artist's Book?

One answer is it's an artwork that uses the book the way a painter uses a canvas or a sculptor uses a block of marble. An artist's book takes advantage of the special qualities that a book can offer: sequence, flow, word & image and structure. Charles Hobson has invented ways to use these qualities to give full artistic expression to a wide range of subjects including poetry, history and myth. This exhibition of his books shows the ways in which his small inventions have led to surprising outcomes.

small inventions The Artist's Books of Charles Hobson

# small inventions

The Artist's Books of Charles Hobson

An Exhibition at The Reva and David Logan Gallery

LEGION OF HONOR  
FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO



## **small inventions**

## small inventions

The Artist's Books of Charles Hobson



*Man Ray's Kiss*, 1995. Pastel/monotype and hand-written text on hand-painted BFK Rives with metronome. 9 x 5 x 5 in. Edition of 4.

*An Exhibition Celebrating the Donation by Marian Kinnney*

The Reva and David Logan Gallery of Illustrated Books  
Legion of Honor  
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

FEBRUARY 2 TO MAY 26, 2019  
Pacific Editions, 2019

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## Foreword

The donation of artists' books from Reva and David Logan to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco from 1998-2001 was transformative. At the Museums, the gift launched the development of a special collection of twentieth century and contemporary artist books and a complementary exhibition program in a newly created gallery for the exclusive exhibition of illustrated books. In the greater Bay Area it energized an already thriving community of artists and presses. One of those presses was Pacific Editions, the imprint of Charles Hobson, established in 1986.

Collector Marian Kinney discovered Hobson's work in 1989 when she visited his San Francisco studio and saw his book *Flaubert & Louise* (1988), Pacific Editions' first limited-edition book. Her interest in poetry and visual art attracted her to Hobson's work and she began acquiring his books as they were published over the next four decades. Kinney's gift of her collection to the Fine Arts Museums was spurred, in part, by its frequent displays of artist illustrated books and complementary educational programs, including an annual lecture or symposium supported by the Logan Foundation.

Kinney's donation of twenty-nine artist's books by Hobson supplements the seven books he created that were already held by the Museums. It is now a nearly complete collection of his work in that medium. We are grateful for her generosity and are deeply appreciative of the efforts of Charles Hobson to bring us together.

KARIN BREUER

*Curator in Charge*

Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

*Mermaid*, 2016. Cloth-covered box containing three painted boxes each fitted with mirrors, transparent sheets of text, monotypes reproduced as high resolution digital prints and separate text in accordion binding. 7 x 7 x 10 in. Edition of 8.



## Introduction

The death of my best friend in 1984 gave me my life in books. As a tribute to him, a few of us published a small volume of his essays. Creating that book showed me that a human being can make a book. It was a revelation. I saw that a book holds expressive capabilities through sequencing, pacing, structure and the interplay of word and image. It is more than a container for words alone.

In each book the subject presents a challenge that requires an invention in order to give life to the subject. In working with Eavan Boland's poem, "Quarantine," the idea of fitting tied twigs into the center fold of the book gave life to what I saw as the poem's essence – the connection that can exist between a man and woman in their darkest hour. In *Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes*, I had a breakthrough when I saw I could add buttons and elastic loops to the pages requiring the pages to be unbuttoned in order for the poem to be read. This offered a way to have Billy Collins's poem presented with a tactile quality reinforcing the poem's sensual feeling.

With *FLIGHT* I searched for a way to attach small paper airplanes into the fold of the book. I had a false start with my first invention which used a bobby pin to fasten the airplane in the crevice at the spine. This allowed the plane to be removed so the text inside the plane could be read. This approach failed since the bobby pin badly mutilated the tip of the plane. A second invention saved me. I found I could make small pop-up tabs to hold the plane in place and allow it to be easily removed for reading.

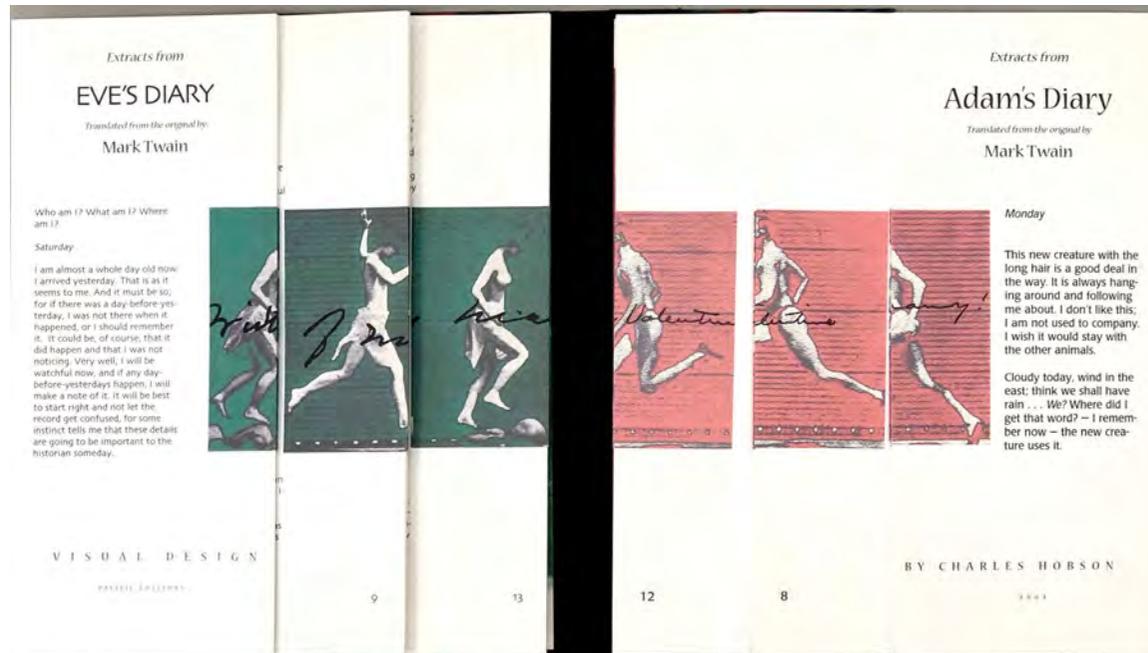
The exhibit, *Small Inventions*, offers a view of my books in which the inventions clearly solved a creative problem. In some cases the breakthrough came with a flash of insight. In other cases it depended on finding unique materials. Sometimes the solution required long periods of trial and error. I'm hopeful that the viewer might see how much an artist's book is conceived and driven to fruition by finding just the right invention.

CHARLES HOBSON

*Fresnel's Tower*, 1997. Limited edition sculptural book with photogravure, stacking cylinders, hand-colored diagrams, and laser prints. Fabric-covered box. 5 1/4 x 5 1/2 in. Edition of 38.

# ADAM & EVE: EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARIES BY MARK TWAIN, 2003

Fiction by Mark Twain



*Adam & Eve: Extracts from the Diaries by Mark Twain.* Concertina and French door binding with cut-out pages, folded sheets with pastel monotypes reproduced as high resolution digital prints, board covers and slipcase. 13 x 5-3/4 x 1-1/2 in. Edition of 38.

Mark Twain wrote the imaginary diaries of Adam and Eve separately over a period of nearly thirteen years beginning in 1893. He wrote Eve's diary in 1905 shortly after his wife Livy had died after a long illness at the age of fifty-eight. Many regard it as his eulogy to her. The book is a double love story, initially about Adam and Eve, and then about Mark Twain and Livy.

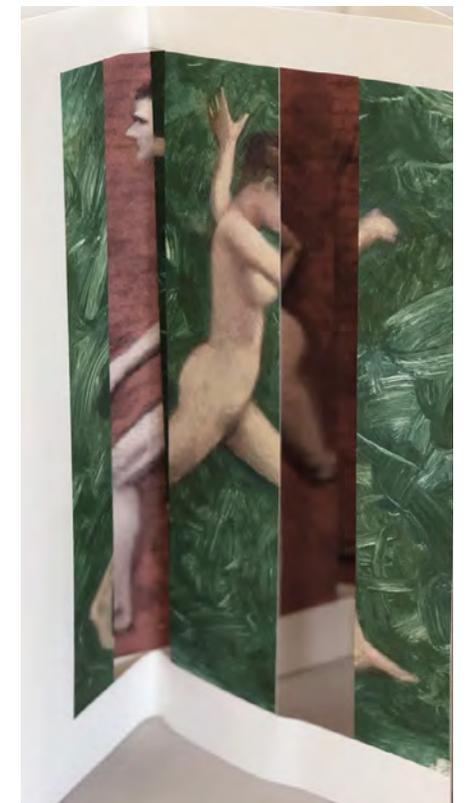
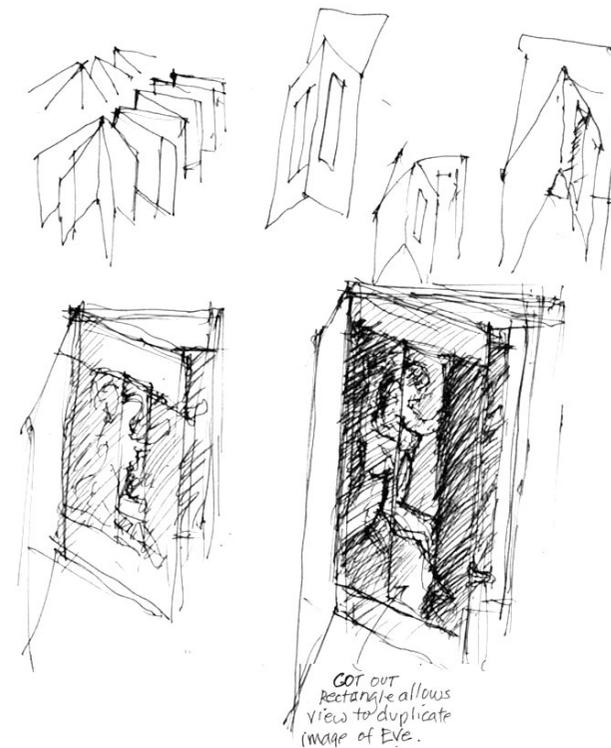
Mark Twain's words and the design of this book follow Adam and Eve as they grow closer to one another and ultimately embrace. The movement toward an embrace is portrayed by two running figures based on the photographs of Eadweard Muybridge published in 1901.

Each page of the book contains a folded image and a scrap of the handwriting of Mark Twain and Livy. The handwriting comes from letters they exchanged during a two year period when doctors forbade Twain to see Livy in her sickroom.

The images of Adam and Eve running have been made as monotypes and printed as high resolution digital prints that wrap around the edges of the pages.

The French door style of binding allows each diary to be read as a single, complete work while at the same time allowing passages from each to be compared.

At the end of the book, images of both Adam and Eve have been cut-out so that they can overlap across one another to form an actual embrace.



## ANCIENT MARINER, 2009

Memoir by Roger Angell



*Ancient Mariner*, Memoir by Roger Angell. Accordion binding with model sails, maritime charts and pastel monotypes reproduced as high resolution digital prints, board cover and slipcase. 15 x 11 x 1 in. Edition of 39.

Roger Angell, the distinguished senior editor at *The New Yorker*, is best known outside the magazine for his writings about baseball. However in his memoir, *Ancient Mariner*, about sailing in Maine for more than sixty years, he uses language elegantly and precisely to convey vivid images of his sailing life.

The maritime charts of Maine used in the book and on the cover have been reproduced from old charts Roger Angell used for much of his life. The title page includes a chart that unfolds to reveal Hog Island, one of the islands he sailed near on countless voyages.

Sails from a model sailboat are sewn into the book so that to read the last page the reader must “jibe” the mainsail by lifting it and turning it to the opposite page. The height of the book has been determined by the height of the mast.

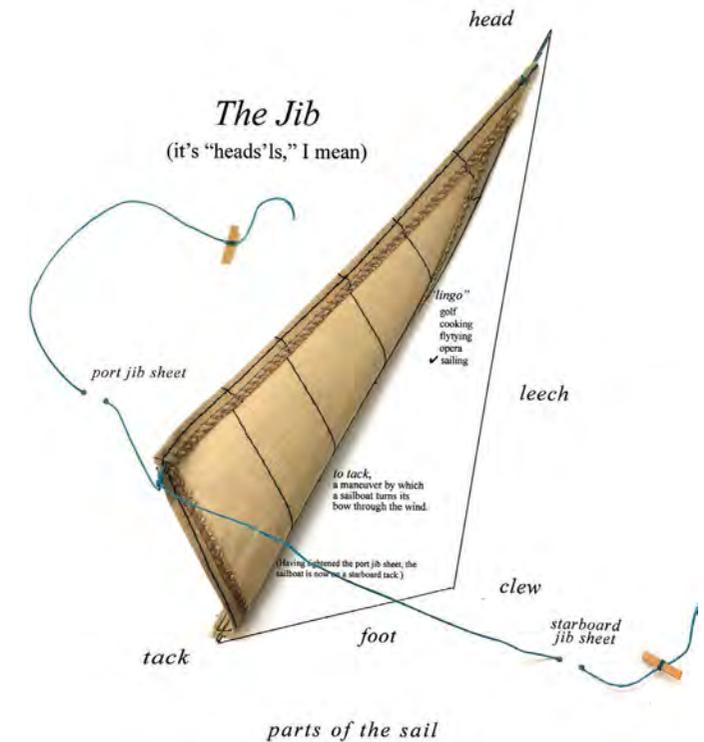
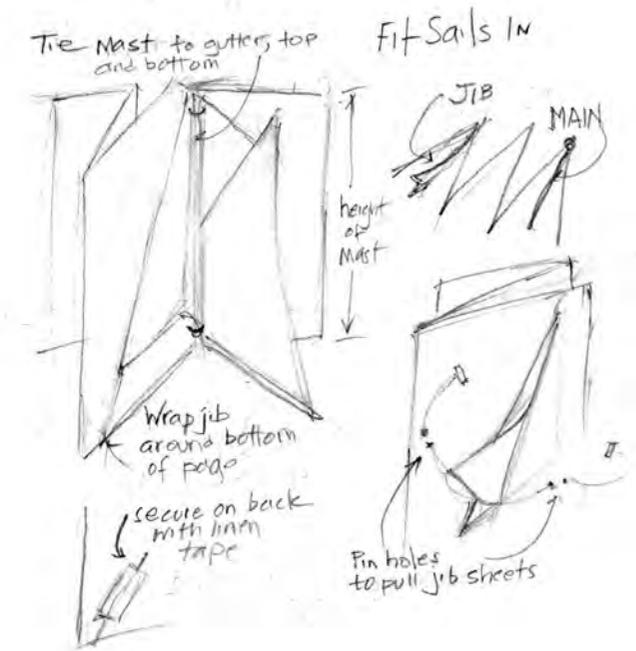


Roger Angell muses about the jargon of sailing and how sailors are often seen as a breed apart. In the book the jib can be shifted by pulling the port jib sheet to reveal some of his nautical terms.

*“Some of it must be the language, although the argot of sailing, to my ear, is not much more arcane than that of golf or cooking or opera or flytying. But say ‘sloop,’ ‘close-reached,’ ‘starboard,’ or ‘tiller’... or murmur ‘halyard,’ ‘jibe,’ ‘headsails,’ ‘genoa,’ and the rest with any air of familiarity... and you are instantly seen as a dilettante, a poseur or a snob, a millionaire, and, almost surely, a Republican.”*

While sailing is at the center of his memoir, baseball still holds his attention.

*“The man at the helm sits at ease, his right hand on the windward coaming and his left on the tiller; his sneakered right leg is comfortably up on the seat, and his gaze, behind shades and a Red Sox cap, is contented...”*



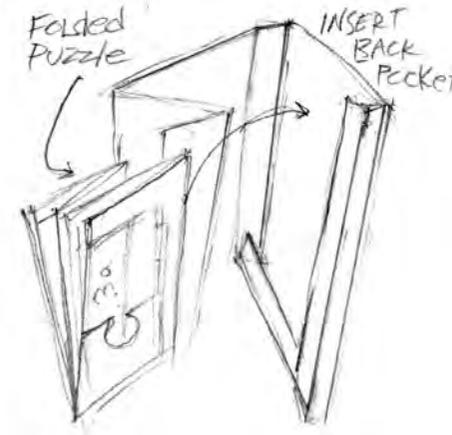
# ANOTACIONES, 2001

Fiction by Barry Lopez



*Anotaciones*, Fiction by Barry Lopez. Accordion book and puzzle in cigar box with pastel monotypes reproduced as high resolution digital prints and corrugated board chemise. Book measures 5 3/4 x 4 1/4 in. Cigar boxes vary in size. Edition of 30.

*Anotaciones* is a fictional story about Cuba, tobacco, history, cigars, heredity, genealogy, Castro and suicide—all in one paragraph, but with sixteen footnotes. The footnotes are each printed on the back of a sixteen-piece puzzle.

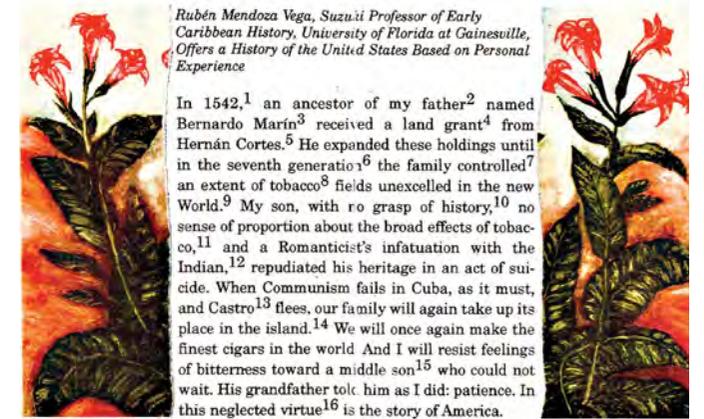


The narrator of the story is the fictional Rubén Mendoza Vega, an aging Latin American scholar residing in South Florida, who has written a submission to a historical journal. The seemingly straightforward main text is made far more intricate by the fictional footnotes which reveal details and insights about the old man's life, disposition and prejudices.

The assembled puzzle shows an image of a stack of cigar boxes on one side and the text of the footnotes on the other.

Putting the puzzle together orders the footnotes so they can be read in sequence with the story. A fold out sheet in the back pocket of the book reproduces the puzzle already assembled.

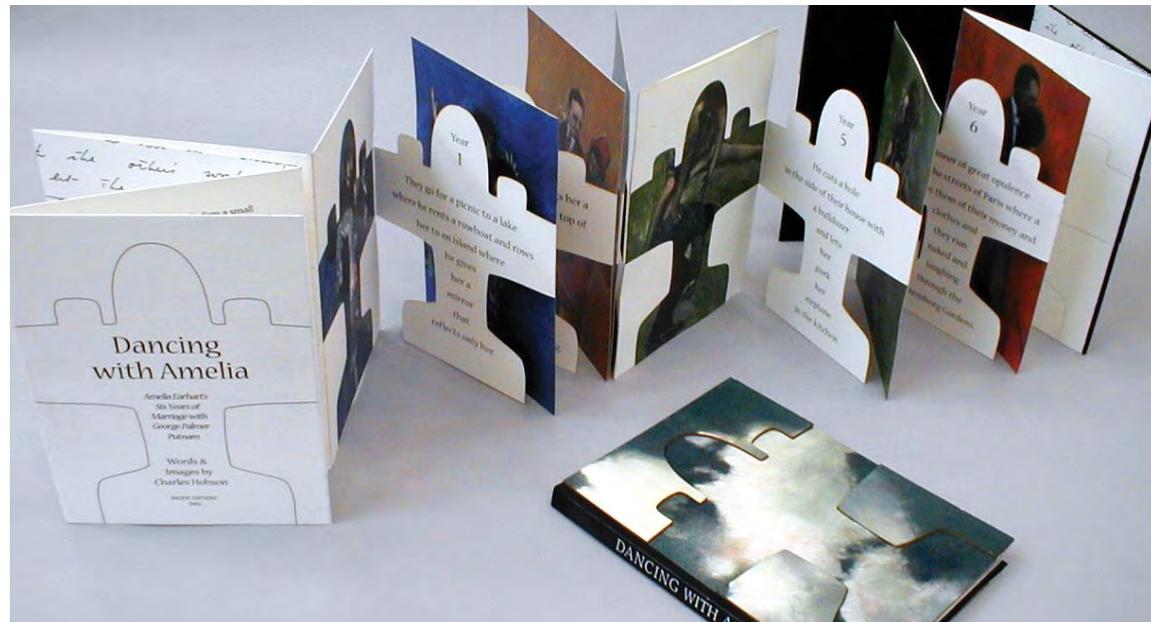
Because the puzzle pieces and the small book are housed in an actual cigar box, the size of each book varies depending on the size of the cigar box.





## DANCING WITH AMELIA, 2000

Fiction by Charles Hobson



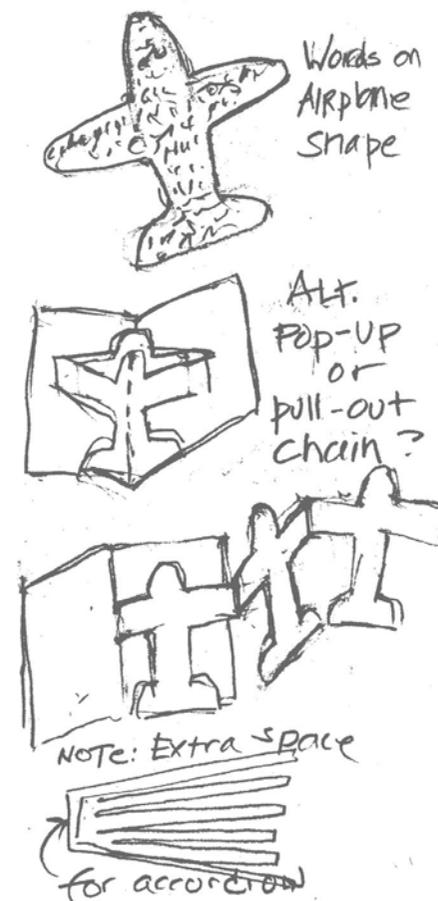
*Dancing with Amelia*, Text by Charles Hobson. Accordion binding with die-cut pages, high resolution digital prints of pastel/monotypes and cloth-covered chemise. 9.5 x 6.5 x 1.5 in. Edition of 38.

*Dancing with Amelia* combines details of Amelia Earhart's life story with fictional episodes based on her relationship with George Palmer Putnam who was her publisher, publicist and husband. Yet on her wedding day in 1931, she wrote a letter to him that revealed little enthusiasm for the marriage. It would hinder her career and interfere with her independence. She wrote: "I must extract a cruel promise and that is you will let me go in a year if we find no happiness together."

For the 1930's it was an amazing letter. Equally amazing was that George agreed to its terms and that the wedding took place later that day. They remained married the rest of her life—another six years, until she perished attempting to fly around the world in 1938.

What did George do each year to keep her married to him? The book offers a fictional answer to that question printed on pages cut out in the shape of an airplane. The images of couples dancing are used to support the idea that their relationship was like a dance.

Their marriage was framed and obscured by the airplane—just as in the book the cut-out shapes of the airplane obscure the images of the dancers. But from the back of the accordion you can see what fine partners they made.



## FRESNEL'S TOWER, 1997

Text by Charles Hobson



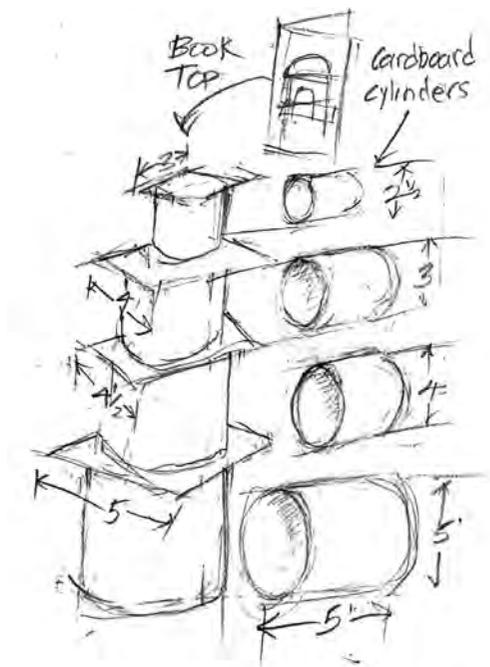
*Fresnel's Tower*, Text by Charles Hobson. Sculptural book with photogravure, stacking cylinders, hand-colored diagrams and cloth-covered box. 5.25 x 5.5 x 6 in. Edition of 38.

*Fresnel's Tower* pays homage to the nineteenth-century French physicist Augustin Fresnel who overcame early learning disabilities to develop the complex lens given his name. His lens revolutionized sea trade by increasing the power of all existing lighthouse lamps.

Fresnel (pronounced frey-nel) was born in Normandy in 1788. He began researching optics in his late 20s. By 1822 he had developed a lens to magnify the flame of a typical lighthouse lamp by nearly three times. He died at age 59, five years after his invention, which he never patented, making it a gift to humanity.

*Fresnel's Tower* is designed to allow viewers to assemble their own lighthouse. The mirrored cards used to build the lighthouse contain a poetic phrase imagining how lighthouses are like stars.

Board cylinders are wrapped with hand-painted paper printed with reproductions of an 18th century lighthouse that nest inside a cloth-covered box. Printed inside each cylinder is a reproduction of a monotype of the sky above the ocean.





# FLIGHT, 2017

The Urge to Fly: Icarus, Leonardo, Cayey, LeBriss and Lilienthal



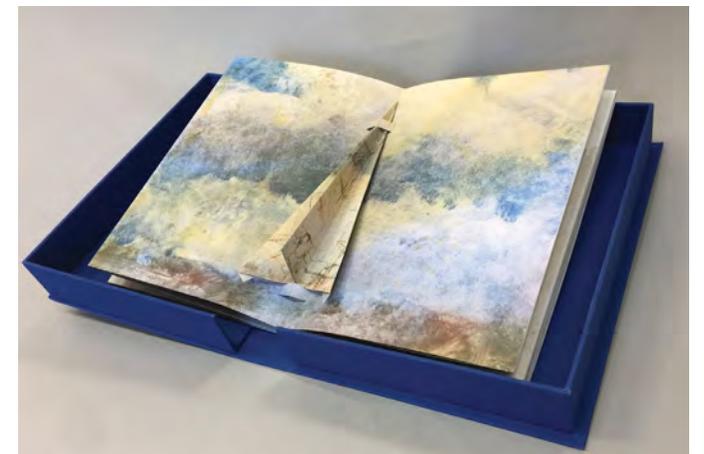
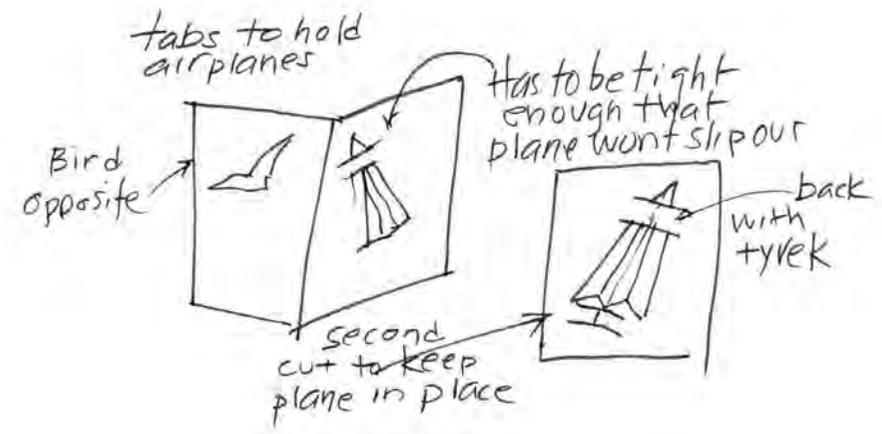
**FLIGHT**, Text by Charles Hobson. Double-sided accordion, drawings, monotypes and acrylic on paper, reproduced as high resolution digital prints and folded airplanes in a fabric-covered box. 11 x 7 x 2 in. Edition of 30.

The human urge to fly like the birds has been an enduring passion for centuries. This double-sided accordion book uses the paper airplane as a metaphor for the pursuit of this passion. The book contains the stories of five men who responded to this urge in the years before 1903 when the Wright Brothers made sustained human flight a reality. Each story starts with a narrative about an attempted flight followed by an image of the sky to which a paper airplane has been attached.

Each paper airplane contains a fictional message written to capture a personal incident in the life of the aspiring aviator.

A second set of unfolded paper airplanes is contained in a pocket in the back of the book and provides an alternative way to read the messages without unfolding the planes in the book.

On the back of the accordion are monotypes of the birds that each of them watched and by which they were inspired.



## MAN RAY'S KISS, 1995

Fiction by Charles Hobson



*Man Ray's Kiss*, Text by Charles Hobson. Accordion binding with metronome, monotype and small volume in trapezoidal box. Object measures 9 x 5 x 5 in. Edition of 4.

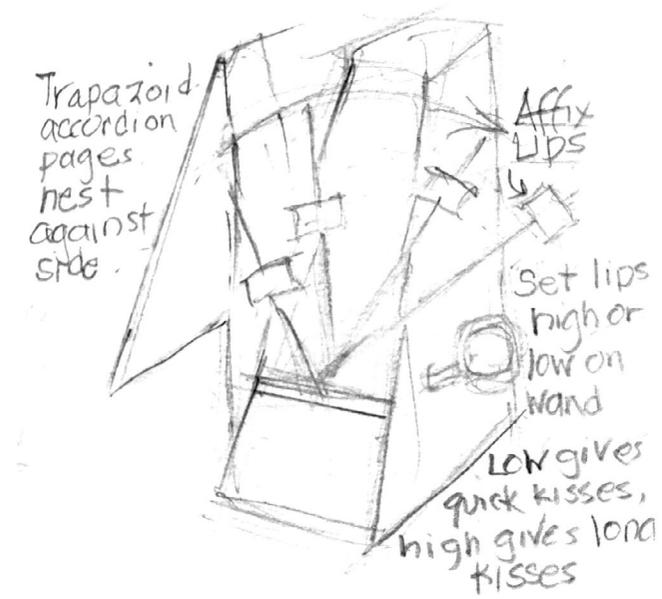
The quest for a way to calculate longitude at sea was sparked by the shipwreck of four British naval vessels in 1707. In response Parliament established the Longitude Prize of nearly \$13 million dollars (in today's value) for anyone who could solve the puzzle. That search led to the invention of the marine chronometer by John Harrison. It revolutionized maritime navigation.

*Man Ray's Kiss* makes a conceptual leap imagining that the Surrealist Man Ray shared a conceptual and intuitive linkage with John Harrison. Harrison was looking for a coordinate to go with latitude, and Man Ray was using the imagination and dreams to go alongside reason, a coordinate which had failed humankind and led to the horrors of World War I.

Man Ray and Harrison's use of small mechanical objects—the clock and the camera—prompted the idea of attaching

accordion pages to a metronome, an object which keeps time and which Man Ray employed in his art.

The handwritten text on the accordion proposes that inside a small box inspiration gave a kiss to time. A small monotype of a kiss has been affixed to the wand of the metronome. When the kiss is high on the wand the kisses are slow, and when it is low, the kisses are quick.



Long Kisses



Quick Kisses



Harrison's 1715 Chronometer



Man Ray's Camera

# MATISSE'S FISHING POLE, 2015

Fiction by Charles Hobson



*Matisse's Fishing Pole*, Fiction by Charles Hobson. French door binding with half-views of Matisse's paintings of bathers. Scroll mounted inside stretched canvas. Painted monotype on canvas and easel in fabric-covered box. 17 x 12 x 3.5 in. Edition of 8.

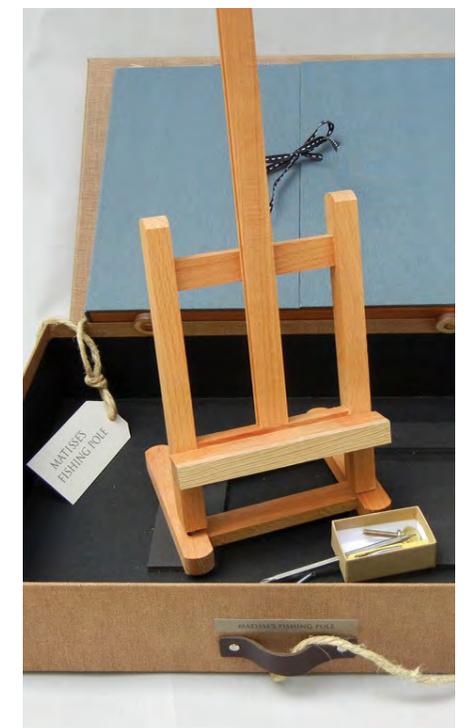
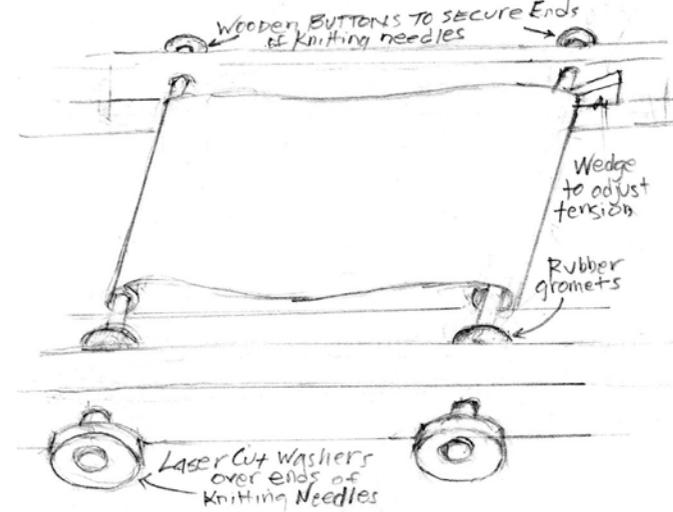
*Matisse's Fishing Pole* hinges on the notion that Matisse could use his brush like a fishing pole to capture images and dreams.

The text imagines Matisse fishing at the river and encountering bathers. Reproductions of Matisse's paintings of bathers have been cut in half to make separate pages in a French door book. The pages overlap a long scroll photograph of the bathing area at Trèsbas, a small French town on the Tarn River. The scroll is mounted in the back of a stretched canvas, and the scroll can be turned to compare Matisse's paintings to actual bathers.

As the scroll is turned, different bathers are set alongside the Matisse paintings, allowing contemporary figures to be juxtaposed with Matisse's images.

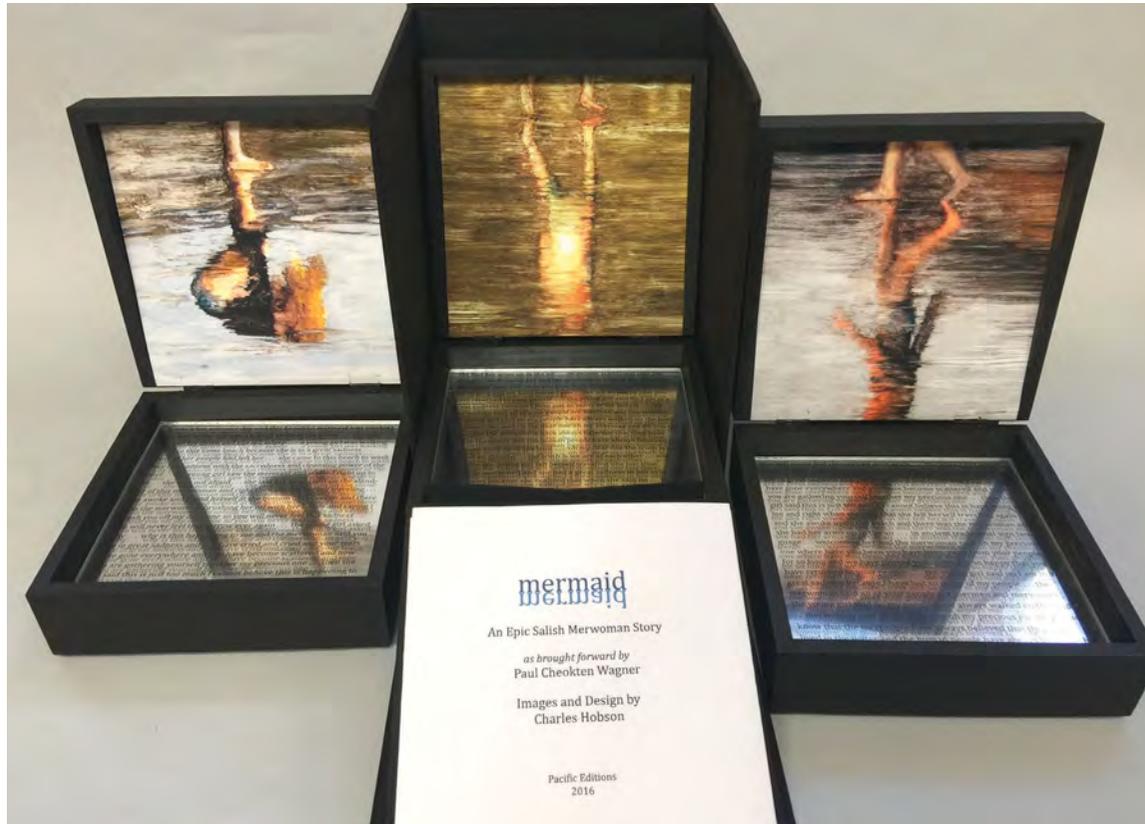
The book comes in a fabric-covered box, much like one in which fishing gear and other paraphernalia might be stored. A paint brush attached on top of the canvas gives the title of the book. An easel is enclosed in the box with a small screw driver and screws for its assembly.

The monotype by Charles Hobson is reproduced as a high resolution digital image and mounted on the face of the canvas and painted with acrylic paint and varnish. The design of the book anticipates that the side showing the monotype can be displayed on the easel, alternating with the scroll.



## MERMAID, 2016

A Salish Myth Recounted by Paul Cheokten Wagner



*Mermaid*, Myth recounted by Paul Cheokten Wagner. Cloth-covered box containing three painted boxes each fitted with mirrors, transparent sheets of text, monotypes reproduced as high resolution digital prints and separate text in accordion binding. 7 x 7 x 10 in. Edition of 8.

*Mermaid* is about reflection. It questions the tangibility of reality. The myth comes from the Salish people of the Pacific Northwest for whom storytelling is the primary way of transmitting their history and myths.

In the myth, a young girl comes to the beach in despair and finds a beautiful sleeping mermaid. Upon awakening the mermaid treats the young girl with compassion and shows her how they are inextricably connected. The girl is caught in a dream between identities as a land dweller and a sea being.

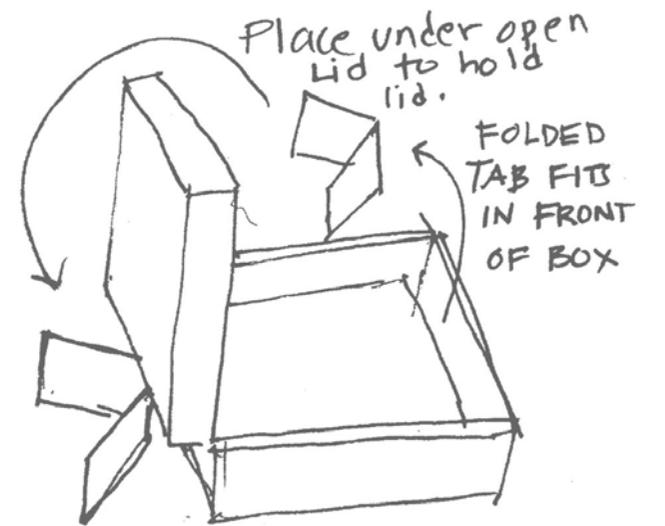


The book is comprised of three boxes, each of which contains an image of the reflection of a beach walker at low tide. A mirror is set in each box so as to reflect the figure right-side-up through a sheet of transparent text.

An essential way to look at the book is to open all three boxes to view each figure in its two aspects—upside-down on the top and right-side up in the reflection in the mirror.

The angle of the lid can be set with a folded tab located in the front of the box. This holds open the lid at the appropriate angle to clearly view the figure reflected in the mirror.

The transparent text in each box is meant to show the role of words in connecting the two aspects of the myth. However, the myth is best read in the small accordion book which unfolds across three panels.



## QUARANTINE, 2011

Poem by Eavan Boland



*Quarantine*, Poem by Eavan Boland. Accordion binding with monotypes reproduced as high resolution digital prints, twigs and string. 9 x 6.5 x 2.25 in. Edition of 42.

Eavan Boland's poem is a stark and severe depiction of the deep relationship between a man and a woman in the harshest of conditions. The imagery and design of the book have been inspired by the bleak winter landscape and frozen trees, and also by the practice of grafting. It is brought to mind by the line of the poem in which "her feet were held against his breastbone" to give her the last warmth of his body.

Grafting is a horticultural technique of inserting twigs from one plant into another plant to join their vascular tissues together.

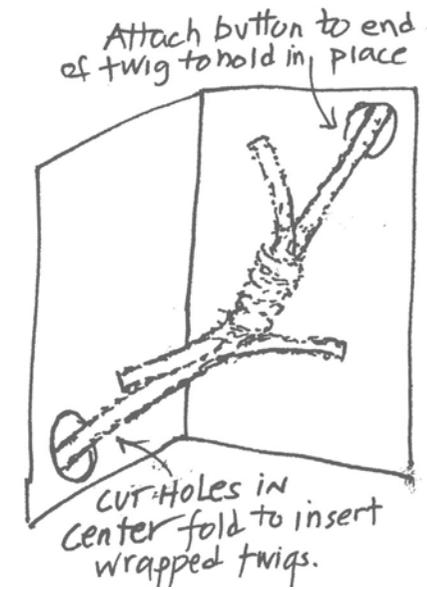
The centerpiece of the book is a pop-up page with actual twigs tied together. The full text of the stanza in Eavan Boland's poem which inspired the connection to grafting is:

*"In the morning they were both found dead.*

*Of cold. Of hunger. Of the toxins of a whole history.*

*But her feet were held against his breast bone.*

*The last heat of his flesh was his last gift to her."*



A video about the making of *Quarantine* is available on Youtube.

## TAKING OFF EMILY DICKINSON'S CLOTHES, 2002

Poem by Billy Collins

*Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes*, Poem by Billy Collins. Accordion binding with buttoned pages and hand-colored digital print in cloth-covered chemise and corrugated wrapper. 8.5 x 7 x 1 in. Edition of 30.

*Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes* is built around Billy Collins's evocative poem. It combines sensual language with an unexpected jolt at its conclusion.

The last stanza reads:

*"So I could plainly hear her inhale  
when I undid the very top  
hook-and-eye fastener of her corset  
and I could hear her sigh when finally  
it was unloosed,  
the way some readers sigh when they  
realize  
that hope has feathers,  
that reason is a plank,  
that life is a loaded gun  
that looks right at you with a yellow  
eye."*

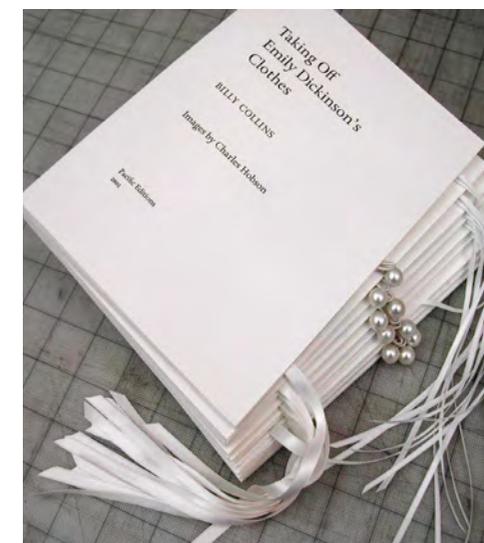
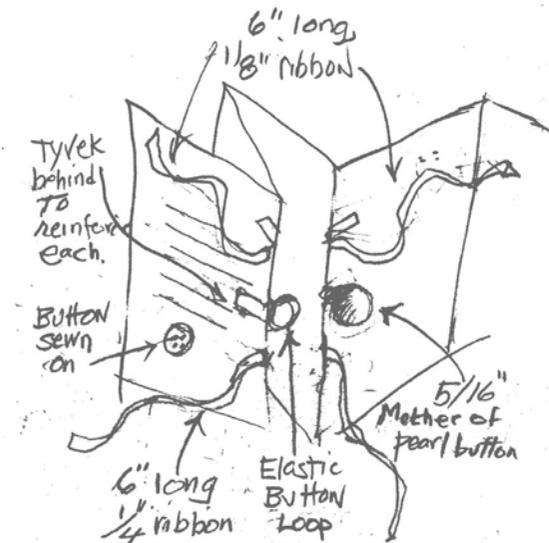
The answer to the question of how to create an artist's book responsive to the poem came with the discovery that the pages could be buttoned together so that a reader must unbutton the pages to read the poem.

The idea of buttoning the pages came from the description of her "long white dress . . . with mother-of-pearl buttons down the back, so tiny and numerous that it takes forever before my hands can part the fabric . . ."



The final design employs buttons, ribbons and lace together with a feather sewn onto a monotype of a ballet dancer. Several versions of the monotype were made before the final image was settled upon.

The monotype is based on a photograph of a dancer adjusting her shoulder strap taken by Edgar Degas in the 1880's, the same era in which Dickinson was writing her poetry. The feather sewn onto it accentuates the image's connection to the poem.





## THE WRITER, 2004

Poem by Richard Wilbur



*The Writer*, Poem by Richard Wilbur. Two volumes housed in a cloth-covered clamshell box with the larger volume containing the text of the poem and high resolution digital reproductions of drawings. The smaller volume is a flip book and contains selected words from the poem. 12 x 12 x 1.25 in. Edition of 54.

This two-volume artist's book was inspired by Richard Wilbur's poem conveying a parent's respect and love for his daughter as she begins the voyage into adulthood.

*"Young as she is, the stuff  
Of her life is a great cargo, and some  
of it heavy:  
I wish her a lucky passage."*

The two volumes are housed in a clamshell box designed both to hold the books and to act as a platform from which to read the two volumes in conjunction with each other.

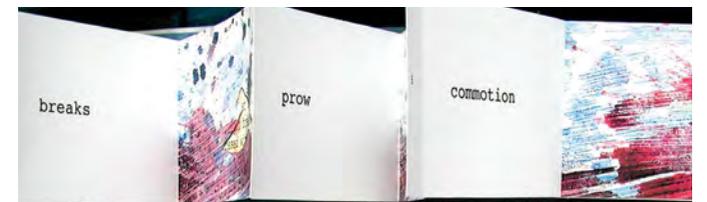
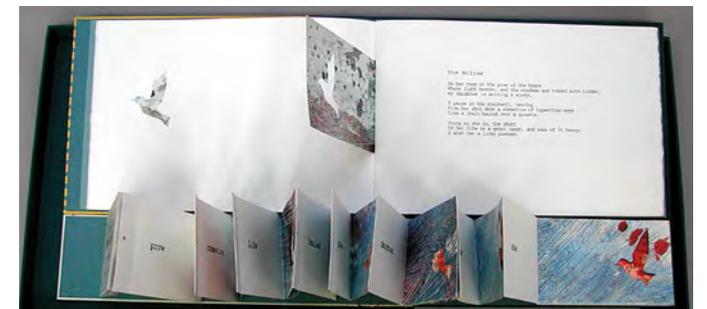
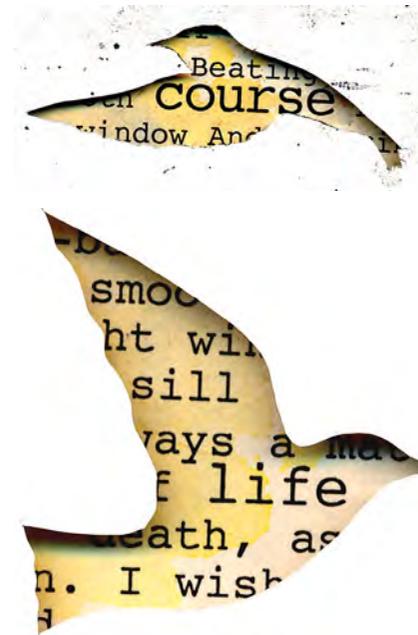
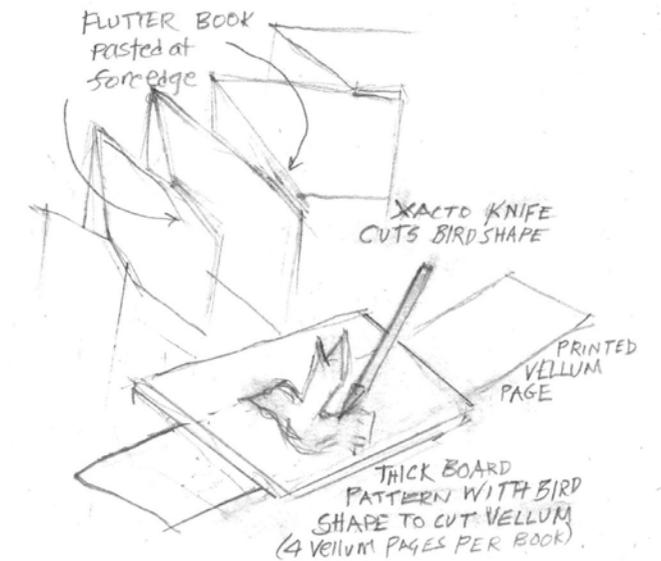
A compelling image that the poet uses in the poem is that of a starling:

*"I remember the dazed starling  
Which was trapped in that very small room, two years ago;  
How we stole in, lifted a sash  
And retreated, not to affright it;  
And how for a helpless hour, through the crack of the door,  
We watched the sleek, wild, dark*

*And iridescent creature  
Batter against the brilliance,  
drop like a glove  
To the hard floor, or the desk-top,  
And wait then, humped and bloody,  
For the wits to try it again;  
and how our spirits  
Rose when, suddenly sure,  
It lifted off from a chair-back,  
Beating a smooth course  
for the right window  
And clearing the sill of the world."*

The larger volume contains the poem. The text pages are interleaved with vellum pages containing hand-cut shapes of starlings in flight, a motif that is central to the poem. Initially, the vellum pages obscure the text, but then lift off to reveal with a flutter and a flap, the words of the poem.

The smaller volume is a flip book, or rather a "flutter book," and contains selected words taken from the poem that are fitted behind the cut-out shape of a starling and give the poem a winged cadence.



comm

5

6

7

stillness

hauled

9

11

lucky

figure

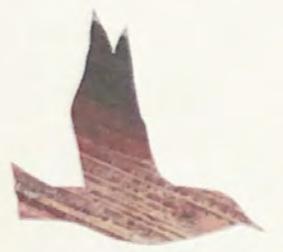
she

young



It is always a matter, my darling,  
Of life or death, as I had forgotten. I wish  
What I wished you before, but harder.

Richard Wilbur



## TREES, 2010

Poem by W.S. Merwin

*Trees*, Poem by W.S. Merwin. Accordion book with monotypes reproduced as high resolution digital prints, architectural model trees, flashlight and wooden pencil box. 4.25 x 12 x 2 in. Edition of 30.

W. S. Merwin's contemplative poem conveys a sense of quiet awe as he considers trees from a mysterious time and place.

Merwin writes:

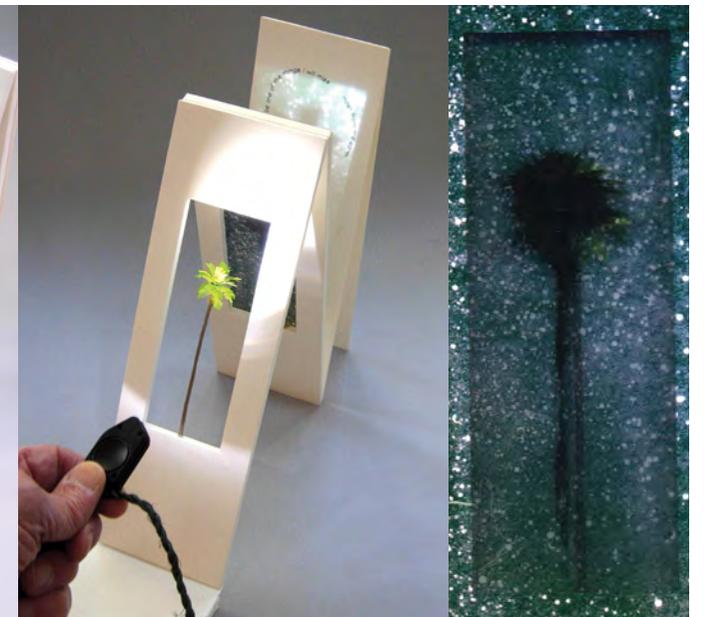
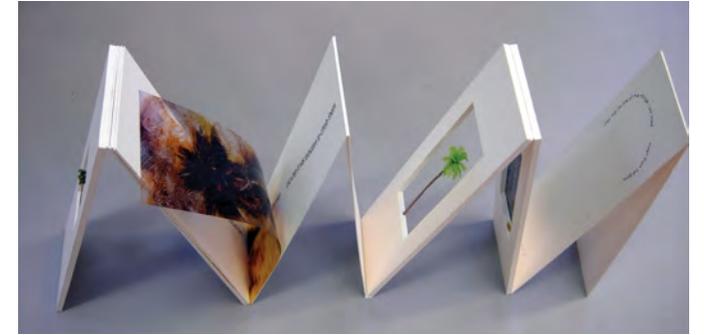
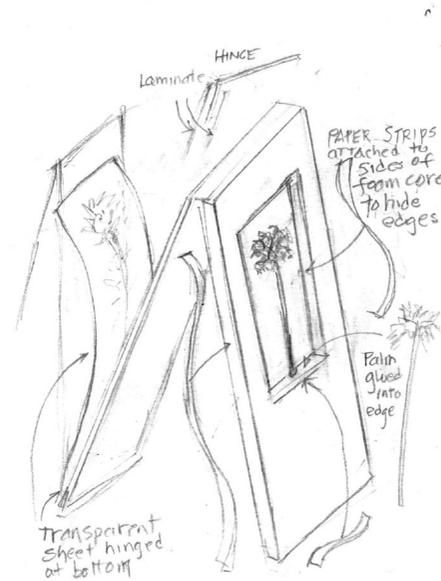
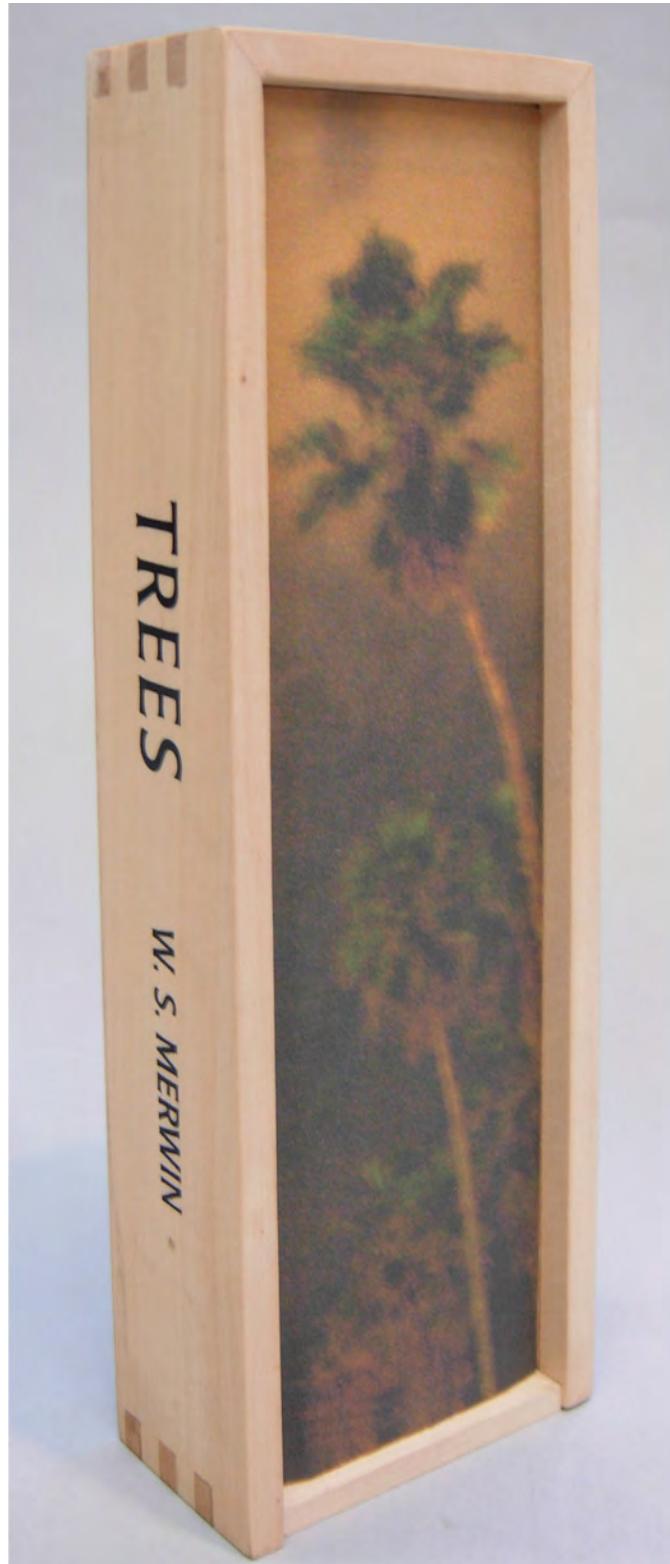
*"I am looking at trees  
they may be one of the things  
I will miss most from the earth"*

The poem was first published in 1977 shortly after he settled in Hawaii. He now lives on a former pineapple plantation in Haiku, Hawaii, where he has spent years restoring the property and raising endangered palm trees.

When fully "accordioned-out" the book offers a succession of views of palm trees. The poem can be read by turning the transparent sheets with monotype images of palm trees and laying them over the text on the board pages. This lays the words of the poem over the shape of the palm tree trunks so the words climb the trees.

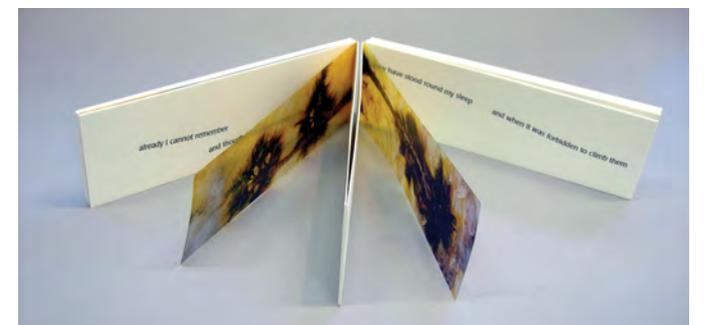
A small architectural model palm tree is set in an opening at the front of the book. It suggests the poet's contemplation of trees in some distant, remembered time, either before death or afterwards.

A second model palm tree sits in the window cut in the last panel through which one sees the image of the night sky. When one shines the flashlight on the tree



through the window, the light projects a shadow of the tree against the star-filled night sky.

There are several ways to orient the book in the same way that the poem offers alternative interpretations of its meaning.



A video of the making of *Trees* is available on Youtube.



Studio View. Edgar Degas images. Degas pioneered the use of the monotype and inspired Hobson's use of the technique.

## Afterword

In 2001, the Getty Center in Los Angeles hosted a wonderful exhibition – a display of (mostly) eighteenth and nineteenth-century automatons, magic lanterns, and countless other marvels of imaginative engineering designed expressly for the purpose of creating unexpected delight and amazement. The show, curated by Barbara Stafford and Frances Terpak, was called *Devices of Wonder*, a title that could also easily apply to *Small Inventions*, our exhibition of the ingenious fabrications of Charles Hobson.

The Getty exhibit's objects spanned a few centuries, but its thematic locus was the *cabinet of curiosities*, a container for objects of fascination and a precursor of the modern museum. The Reva and David Logan Gallery of Illustrated Books, in which Mr. Hobson's imaginative structures are arrayed for this exhibition, now bears a striking resemblance to such a cabinet. In it are a dozen or so objects that the artist defines as books: a book with mysterious sliding panels, a book in sections that stack up to become a lighthouse, a book as (literally) a jigsaw puzzle, a book that keeps time with a metronome, a book whose mirrored surfaces read the reader.

That the cabinet of curiosities achieved great popularity in the Age of Enlightenment seems appropriate, too, in relation to this work. Without their core of historic and scientific inquiry, and literary bona fides, the books might be dismissed as mere gimmickry; on the contrary, they are invariably curiosities that spur curiosity, devices that engender thought, contrivances of illumination. And don't hold it against them if that illumination is sometimes provided by a penlight: they are the products of a dedicated maker whose intent is to be an artist of history, a distiller of the beauty in science, and an architect for poetry.

Charles Hobson has been a leading member of the Bay Area's flourishing artist's book community over the past 30 years. As founder of a book art curriculum at the San Francisco Art Institute, he has been an important cultivator of talent and an evangelist for the art form he holds dear.

The Logan Gallery is a significant foothold for this under-recognized art form, bringing rarely seen book work from the museum's collection of famous 20th century masters to public view. With this exhibition it is our great pleasure to widen the gallery's purview to show work that so well represents a community of artists for whom the book is their primary medium, and whose vision transforms the book, truly, into a device of wonder.

STEPHEN WOODALL

*Collections Specialist*

Reva and David Logan Collection of Illustrated Books

Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts



### **Biography**

Charles Hobson uses monotypes and printmaking variations to construct images for books and works on paper. He has published more than forty artist's books under the imprint of Pacific Editions and has taught at the San Francisco Art Institute about contemporary artists' books since 1990. He is now a professor emeritus. His work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, the Bancroft Library, Stanford University and the National Gallery, among others. His archive has been acquired by Stanford University. He lives and works in San Francisco and Stinson Beach, CA. Additional details may be viewed at [www.charleshobson.com](http://www.charleshobson.com).



A video entitled "Three Artists Books by Charles Hobson" is available at [Vimeo.com](https://vimeo.com)

### **BORN**

Bridgeton, New Jersey

### **EDUCATION**

**1988** BFA, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA

**1968** LLB, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

**1965** BA, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA

#### SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2019 "Small Inventions," Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Achenbach Foundation, San Francisco, CA

2016 "Capturing the Moment: Visual Journals," Bolinas Museum, Bolinas, CA

2011 "Night Ocean," Carlsten Gallery, Stevens Point, WI

2010 "Books by Charles Hobson," Book Club of California, San Francisco, CA

2009 "Why I Love Books," University of Nevada, Reno, NV and Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO

2008 "Experiments in Navigation," Stanford University, Stanford, CA

2006 "Why I Love Books," LSU, Baton Rouge, LA

2005 "Artist's Books," Patricia Sweetow Gallery, San Francisco, CA;

"Book Works," University of Washington, Seattle, WA

2004 "Why I Love Books," University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

1998 "Shipwreck Stories," Museum of Art & History, Santa Cruz, CA;

"Works by Charles Hobson," Craven Gallery, Martha's Vineyard, MA

1997 "Charles Hobson," Dorothy Weiss Gallery, San Francisco, CA

1996 "Shipwreck Stories," California Historical Soc., San Francisco, CA

1995 "Charles Hobson," Dorothy Weiss Gallery, San Francisco, CA

1993 "Famous Couples," San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA

1992 "Famous Couples," Roy Boyd Gallery, Chicago, IL

#### AWARDS/COMMISSIONS/FELLOWSHIPS

2014 Commission, Imagery Estate Winery, Glen Ellen, CA

2013 San Francisco Art Institute, Professor Emeritus, Tenure 1990-2013

2010 Oscar Lewis Award for Achievements in Artists' Books, Book Club of California, San Francisco, CA

2004 Individual Artist Grant, Marin Arts Council, San Rafael, CA

2003 Honoree, Achievement in Artists' Books, Artists' Book Council, Fine Arts Museums, San Francisco, CA

2000 Artist-in-Residence, Xerox PARC, Palo Alto, CA

1999 Garden Pathway Design, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Palo Alto, CA

1994 Reames Award, Pacific Arts League, Palo Alto, CA

1993 Affiliate Artist, Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA

#### TRADE PUBLICATIONS

*The Wolf Who Ate the Sky*, (Illustrator) Heyday Books, Berkeley, CA, 2015

*Seeing Stars*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA, 2001

*Parisian Encounters*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA, 1994

*Leonardo Knows Baseball*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA, 1991

#### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 "Landmarks: Maps as Literary Illustration," Houghton Library, Harvard, Cambridge, MA

2017 "BOOKS of Course: Teaching Collections," San Francisco Center for the Book, San Francisco, CA

2016 "Imagery Art for Wine," Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA;

"ReTooled," Bedford Gallery, Walnut Creek, CA;

"California BookWorks," Logan Gallery, Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA;

"Just One Look," University of Washington, Seattle, WA

2015 "The Contained Narrative," Minnesota Center for the Book, Minneapolis, MN;

"From the West," Boreas Fine Art, Chicago, IL;

"The Art of the Book," Seager Gray Gallery, Mill Valley, CA

2013 "Under the Wings of Artemis," Univ. of Washington, Seattle, WA

2012 "For Your Eyes Only," Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV;

"Entering the Wild," DiRosa Museum of Art, Napa, CA

2011 "Celebrating 100 Years," New York Public Library, New York, NY

2010 "The Seduction of Duchamp," Los Gatos Art Museum, Los Gatos, CA;

"Book as Medium," Sesnon Art Gallery, University of Santa Cruz, CA

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

*500 Handmade Books*, Volume 2, Lark Books/Sterling Publishing, 2013

*Handmade Books*, Lark Books/Sterling Publishing, 2010

*BOOK ART OBJECT*, Codex Foundation, Berkeley, CA, 2009

"Hobson Pacific Editions," Richard Nalley, *Forbes Life*, April 2009

*500 Handmade Books*, Lark Books, Chapel Hill, NC, 2008

"The Ebb and Flow of Words - A Visit with Charles Hobson," Nicholas A. Basbanes, *Fine Books & Collections*, Sep/Oct 2008

"From Words into 3-D Art," *The Press Democrat*, Santa Rosa, CA, Sunday, April 8, 2007

*Expressive Handmade Books*, Alisa Golden, Sterling Publishing Co., New York, 2005

"The Artist Turns to the Book," Joyce Pellerano Ludmer, *Art Documentation*, Vol. 24, Number 1, Los Angeles, 2005

"Marin Arts Council Awards Grants," *Artweek*, November 2004

"Maps as Language," *Matrix 24: A Review for Printers & Bibliophiles*, Number 24, Winter 2004

"An Affair of the Heart," Karen Oberdorfer, *New Fillmore*, June 2004

"Heart Monitor, Kids Write About Love," *SF Chronicle*, May 23, 2004

"Revealing the Mysteries," Betsy Davids, *Ampersand*, Vol. 20, San Francisco, CA, 2002

### **Artist's Books by Charles Hobson**

- *Books donated by Marian Kinney*

*Papers, 1984*

Essays by Bruce Nelson. Introduction by Charles Hobson.  
Designed by Alicen Armstrong. Typeset and printed at the West Coast Print Center. 7 1/4 x 5 inches. Edition of 300.

*A Supper in Montmartre, 1985*

Memoir by Harriet Lane Levy. Frontispiece etching by Charles Hobson. Bancroft Library Press. 10 1/4 x 11 x 1/4 inches. Edition of 30.

- *Flaubert & Louise: Letters and Impressions, 1988*

A portfolio of five monotypes by Charles Hobson accompanying the exchange of letters between Gustave Flaubert and Louise Colet in the 1840s. Co-published by Limestone Press and Pacific Editions. 15 x 12 x 3/4 inches. Edition of 18.

- *Leonardo Knows Baseball, 1990*

Accordion book juxtaposing excerpts from Leonardo Da Vinci's notebooks on how to draw the human figure with soft ground etchings of baseball figures. 10 x 8 x 1/2 inches. Edition of 20.  
Trade edition published by Chronicle Books, 1991.

*Variation on the Word SLEEP, 1991*

Poem by Margaret Atwood. Pastel/monotype on accordion fold in lacquered box. 7 x 5 1/4 x 2 1/4 inches. Edition of 20.

*Degas Dancing: Lessons & Fragments, 1991*

A fragmentary biography of Edgar Degas with five portrait monotypes by Charles Hobson accompanied by writing of Degas and others marking key passages in his life. Easel Accordion. 15 1/2 x 11 3/4 x 1 inches. Edition of 10.

- *Impromptu, 1994*

Poem by Kathy Evans and Tom Centolello. Monotype images by Charles Hobson and Kay Bradner reproduced as photographs. 7 1/2 x 5 3/4 inches. Prototype and offset edition of 100 copies.

*Balzac's Coffee Pot, 1994*

Honoré de Balzac's comment on the importance of coffee, together with a handwritten sentence and a pastel/monotype of Balzac's coffee pot. Accordion format. 8 x 8 x 1/2 inches. Edition of 5.

- *Parisian Encounters, 1994*  
French door format book with monotype/pastel portraits of eight famous couples who met in Paris, with maps and eccentric biographies. 6 x 11 inches. Chronicle Books trade edition.

- *Clouds & Dreams, 1995*  
Stacking accordion book in black linen case with laser print reproductions of cloud images and portraits of Surrealists. 10 x 8 x 2 1/2 inches. Edition of 3.

- *Breton's Dream, 1995*  
Pastel/monotype with text on Mylar mounted on model ship with text describing the relationship between André Breton and Admiral Sir Cloudishley Shovell. 16 x 12 x 5 inches. Edition of 4.

*Magritte's Buckets, 1995*

Pastel/monotypes mounted in buckets made from board, copper, wire, brass tubing & bamboo, with small book describing the relationship between Isaac Hawkins and René Magritte. 4 x 4 x 2-1/2 inches. Edition of 10.

- *Man Ray's Kiss, 1995*  
Pastel/monotype and handwritten text on hand-painted BFK Rives with metronome and text describing the relationship between John Harrison and Man Ray. 9 x 5 x 5 inches. Edition of 4.

- *Shipwreck Stories, 1996*  
Accordion book with seven photogravures, hand-colored charts and drawings on Mylar. 10 1/4 x 8 3/4 x 1 inches. Edition of 28.

- *Fresnel's Tower, 1997*  
Sculptural book with photogravure, stacking cylinders with hand-colored diagrams and laser prints. Fabric-covered box. 5 1/4 x 5 1/4 x 6 inches. Edition of 38.

*Andromeda Imagined, 1998*

Concertina with six monoprints over star atlas drawings from 1690, six IRIS prints from mixed media drawings and six hand-punched constellations. 1 x 10 1/2 x 1 1/4 inches. Edition of 30.

- *Human Touch, 1999*  
Quotes from diverse sources with ink drawings photocopied onto hand-painted BFK Rives. Stab binding. 5 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 3/8 inches. Edition of 40.

- *Writing on the Body, 1999*  
Writings by Edgar Degas. Modified accordion book with eight hand-colored photogravure etchings in slipcase with letterpress by Jack Stauffacher. 11 1/2 x 7 3/4 x 3/4 inches. Edition of 45.
- *Dancing with Amelia, 2000*  
Fictional writing by Charles Hobson and airplane cutouts with monotypes of dancers as IRIS prints in accordion with laser cut cover in cloth-covered chemise. 8 3/4 x 6 1/2 x 1 1/2 inches. Edition of 38.
- *Anotaciones, 2001*  
Text by Barry Lopez with laser cut puzzle pieces. Collage on cigar box and accordion book with foldout puzzle key. 10 1/2 x 7 x 2 inches (varies). Edition of 30.
- *Seeing Stars, 2001*  
Adaptation of *Andromeda Imagined* for children with 10 die-cut cards, flashlight and book. 6 3/4 x 5 x 1 inches. Chronicle Books trade edition.
- *Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes, 2002*  
Poem by Billy Collins. Accordion binding using buttons, ribbons, feathers and lace and containing a pastel monotype reproduced as a digital pigment print with hand coloring. Seven pages with hidden definitions and foldout stanza from an Emily Dickinson poem. 8 1/2 x 7 x 1 inches. Edition of 30.
- *Adam and Eve: Extracts from the Diaries by Mark Twain, 2003*  
Fiction by Mark Twain. Concertina and French door structure with cut-out pages and collaged folded sheets with board covers and slipcase. 13 x 5-3/4 x 1-1/2 inches. Edition of 38.
- *Three Kisses, 2004*  
Postcard photographs by Robert Doisneau in translucent envelopes, in an accordion with a corrugated board slipcase. 5 1/2 x 4 x 3/4 inches. Edition of 90.
- *The Writer, 2004*  
Poem by Richard Wilbur. Two volumes housed in a clamshell box. 12 x 12 x 1-1/4 inches. Edition of 54.
- *The Near Woods, 2006*  
Essay by Barry Lopez. Published in a letterpress edition of 165 copies by Tangram Press in 2005 with twenty-six copies left unbound to be made into a special edition with hand-colored digital pigment prints and paper-covered boards. 10 x 7 inches. Edition of 26.

*R.O.W, 2006*

Folded relief print originally three feet square. Kay Bradner and Charles Hobson collaborated on the design of the print. Accordion binding in paper-covered boards and housed in a transparent, corrugated chemise which is closed with sailing line and a cleat. 18 x 9 inches. Edition of 12.

- *red thread, two women, 2006*  
Collaborative poem by Paula Sager and Lizbeth Hamlin. Two signatures sewn into an accordion with hand colored digital pigment prints, bound in boards with a fabric-covered slipcase. 8 x 8.5 x 2.5 inches. Edition of 38.
- *Nelson & Emma, 2008*  
Text by Charles Hobson. Concertina binding with sewn signatures, hand-painted pages with digital prints on transparent sheets, lenticular photo and board cover, in net embossed slipcase. 10 1/2 x 11 1/2 x 1 inches. Edition of 35.
- *Ancient Mariner, 2009*  
Essay by Roger Angell. Printed letterpress on BFK Rives. Accordion bound in boards covered with reproductions of the charts used by Roger Angell. Slipcase covered in canvas to emulate sailcloth. 15.5 x 12 x 1.5 inches. Edition of 39.
- *Rituals for Life Milestones, 2009*  
Fifteen rituals by Sandra Hobson. High resolution digital photographs by Charles Hobson. Sewn signature with board cover and stone. 7 x 8 x 1/2 inches. Edition of 500.
- *The Magic Jacket, 2009*  
Text by Charles and Sandra Hobson. Charcoal and pastel drawings by Charles Hobson printed as high resolution digital prints. Accordion fold structure. 6-1/2 x 4 3/4 x 1/2 inches. 12 pages. Edition of 90.
- *Trees, 2010*  
Poem by W.S. Merwin. Monotypes by Charles Hobson reproduced as high resolution digital prints on transparent film. 4-1/4 x 12 x 2 inches. Edition of 30.
- *Quarantine, 2011*  
Poem by Eavan Boland. Monotypes by Charles Hobson of bundled twigs printed as high resolution digital prints with pastel. Accordion with cut-out page with tied twigs. 18 pages. 9 x 6.5 x 2.25 inches. Edition of 42.

- *Degas in Rome, 2013*  
Fiction by Charles Hobson. Accordion binding. Original drawings in the style of Degas by Charles Hobson reproduced as high resolution digital prints in fabric-covered box. 12 x 8.5 x 2 inches. Edition of 34.
- *Diederot Decaptioned, 2014*  
Text by Charles Hobson. Ten vovelles contain alternative captions for the original engravings. 13 x 9.5 x 1.5 inches. Edition of 12.
- *Matisse's Fishing Pole, 2015*  
Text by Charles Hobson. French door binding with half-views of Matisse's paintings of bathers. 34-inch scroll with photograph of bathers. Stretched canvas measuring 14 x 11 x 2 inches. Box measures 17 x 12 x 3.5 inches. Easel included measures 17 x 6.5 x 6.5 inches assembled. Edition of 8.
- *The Man in Bogotá, 2015*  
Short story by Amy Hempel. High resolution digital photographs by Mary Daniel Hobson. Concertina binding. 11 x 8.75 x 1 inches. Edition of 40.
- *Mermaid, 2016*  
Salish myth by Paul Cheokten Wagner. Wooden boxes fitted with mirrors and transparent sheets containing the text of the myth. Monotypes reproduced as high resolution digital prints. Each set of boxes housed in a fabric-covered box measuring 7 x 7 x 10 inches. Edition of 8.
- *FLIGHT, 2017*  
Double-sided accordion binding with monotypes reproduced as high resolution digital prints with folded paper airplanes in clamshell box. 11 x 7 x 2 inches. Edition of 30.

## Acknowledgements

The work described in this catalog maps a journey I've taken that spans more than thirty years. On this journey I have been blessed with colleagues, friends and mentors who have encouraged me and helped me find my path. Marie Dern opened my eyes to the idea of a book speaking as a whole. Joseph Goldyne and Larry Thomas guided my work in etching and monotype. Kay Bradner shared her artistry as a printmaker in my projects, as did John DeMerritt who has worked on the edition bindings of most of my books. Harry and Sandra Reese of Turkey Press gave me confidence in my work from the earliest days. Alice Shaw has been an invaluable colleague assisting me in completing projects for more than twenty years.

Then there are the collectors, both private and at institutions, who provided encouragement by acquiring my work and validating the path I have taken. I am so fortunate that there are too many to list here, but I must name the collector Marian Kinney. Her support inspired this exhibition with her donation of twenty-nine of my books that she acquired beginning nearly thirty years ago. Karin Breuer and Steve Woodall at the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts have warmly supported the acquisition of my work. The donation of the books by Marian Kinney, when combined with the books already owned by the Achenbach means the institution now holds thirty-six of my works.

I am indebted to Tom Ingalls and Christopher Jordan at Ingalls Design for the design and production of this catalog, and to Mary Daniel Hobson and Anna Rauh for their perceptive editing and proofing.

And I give great, great gratitude to Sandra Hobson. When the journey took me though dark places and when the side roads beckoned, she has been my guide and guardian angel soothing aching muscles and shining her light on the road map for me.

## **Colophon**

### DESIGN

Ingalls Design, San Francisco, California  
Christopher Jordan & Thomas Ingalls

### TYPOGRAPHY

Ziggurat, Chronicle Text, and Whitney by Hoefler & Co.

### PAPER

*Cover:* 100# Cover Satin  
*Interiors:* 100# Text Dull Coated

### PRINTING AND BINDING

Autumn Press, Berkeley, California