Books (blank)
Kimberly Gosi, Nancy Froehlich, and Kristen Svilain

Blank books are a refuge for you and your ideas. They can be used as sketchbooks, journals, diaries, or travel logs. They are great for taking notes, jotting down phone numbers, or generating ideas. Why not customize your blank books from conception? Numerous publications exist that detail the processes of book-binding. The introduction offered here demonstrates just how easy it is to train paper and cardboard to take the shape of a book.

ANATOMY OF THE BOOK Multiple sheets of paper bound together comprise the blank book. Your choice of binding methods will be influenced by factors such as page count, paper weight, folding, desired durability, the quantity of books to be produced, and whether or not it is important for the book to lie flat when opened. The following pages present several ways to construct a book. Endless variations can be made to each type.
TEXT BLOCKS The core of most books is the text block—a group of pages that are sewn or glued together. Cheap paperbacks typically are glued, whereas well-made books (such as this one) are sewn. Look for the stitches in the crease between pages 49 and 50! A sewn book is made from signatures, groups of pages that are folded down the middle and then gathered together to make a larger text block. A book consisting of just one signature can be stapled through the centerfold.

FRENCH FOLD Individual sheets of paper folded in half and bound together at the open—rather than the creased—edge are called French folds. Sheets folded this way can either be glued together or bound with a coil, posts, or stitches. This method is useful if you want to avoid double-sided printing.

SEWN SIGNATURES Make signatures by folding four or more sheets of paper together down the center, puncuring eight evenly spaced holes in the fold of each signature. Sew along the first signature, beginning from the outside bottom hole and weaving out through the next hole. Continue in this pattern until you reach the top of the signature. Attach the second signature by beginning to sew at the top hole and continuing the stitch through the bottom. Hold the signatures securely together by tying a square knot around the exposed thread along the top and bottom lines of the binding. Repeat this process until the desired text block size is bound. Books made from sewn signatures lie flat when opened.

TAPE BINDING Copy centers provide a service called tape binding, in which glue is heated and then attached to a group of pages before it cools again. The glue is concealed beneath a strip of tape. Tape-bound books are surprisingly durable, and they lie flat when opened. This method works well for binding books consisting of at least thirty pages. (The glue will keep out and spoil books with too few pages.)

To make your own tape binding, trim covers and text block to size. Tightly clamp them together on three sides, leaving one side exposed for the spine. Apply three or four generous coats of PVA adhesive along exposed side, allowing each application to dry before applying the next. Conceal glue with duct tape, contact paper, or another material.

MECHANICAL BINDINGS A spiral-bound notebook and a loose-leaf binder have something in common: they both consist of single sheets of paper joined together with hardware. This makes them different from books that are made from sheets folded into signatures (see opposite page). There are several ways to construct a book out of loose sheets; each one allows you to combine different kinds of sheets in a single book.

COIL BINDING This method is economical for short-run publications as well as for making blank books. Coil-bound books lie flat when opened, which makes them easy to use. Copy shops offer a variety of coil bindings. The book shown here was made with a GBC Pro-Click binding system, which consists of a compact, affordable hole puncher and plastic binding coils.

BINDING STUDS Unlike screws you would buy at a hardware store, binding studs are designed specifically for bookmaking. They come in several different sizes and have a closure that covers the back of the screw. Binding studs are available at arts-and-crafts stores. Grommets can be used in a similar way to bind books.

BINDER RINGS allow you to informally collect a set of blank or printed pages. Trim the covers and the paper to the same size. Place the front and back covers in position and gently tap the book on a flat surface to align the pages. Clamp the book together with butterfly clips and drill or punch a hole in the top left corner at least 1/4 inch away from the edge. Insert a binder ring for a more finished look, attach small grommets to the front and back covers.

Design Nancy Froehlich

Design Kimberli Bast
**Covers** can be made from a variety of materials, adding physical as well as graphic character to your book. A few ideas are shown here.

### Hand Sewn Chopstick

Begin with shaping two strings of waxed linen thread at each end of the first stick, so that there is an equal amount of thread on either side of the stick. Secure the first stick with a single square knot on each string. Proceed with the next stick, alternating its direction and securing with a knot from each string. Repeat this process until the desired cover size is created. Adhere the chopstick cover to two panels of chipboard using a hot glue gun for support. Align each panel with opposite edge of the cover, leaving enough space for the text block plus 1/8 inch in the middle. Attach the text block (made from seven signatures) to the cover by weaving leather or ribbons through the center exposed stitch of the text block and the reserved chopstick space in middle of the cover. Secure leather ribbons with hot glue.

### Found Cover

Used pages from existing books or magazines can contain fun imagery to make witty and surprising covers. The book to the left uses chipboard covers that are attached together using duct tape (which acts as the spine), and then covered with pages from an old serving book. The tape-bound text block is then glued to the endpapers.

### Photo Cover

Use an old photo or personal snapshot as a cover. This book was tape bound and covered with a laminated photo that was adhered to card stock paper.

### Wood Binder

Cut wood to desired size for covers and spine. Trim piano hinges to the same size of the cover. Use "liquid nails" to attach hinges between the covers and spine. Add an inside pocket, pen holder, and notepad using wood glue.
Few experiences are more satisfying than publishing your own words and images in the pages of a book. A printed book can serve as a professional portfolio, a collection of family photographs, or a volume of poetry. It can also have a more ephemeral life as a brochure, theater program, or zine. You can bind a single volume painstakingly by hand or employ mechanical means to produce it cheaply for wider distribution. Using page layout programs and a variety of output methods, you can put creative content into print in relatively inexpensive ways. Whether you are looking to reach five people or five hundred, we have ideas for how to get yourself published.

**ARTIST'S BOOKS** To create the content for this chapter, we designed books for friends who are artists. Each artist specializes in a different medium: painting, song writing, photography, and mixed media. By designing the books in response to the artists’ work, we were able to test a variety of formats and binding methods.

We used some of the binding methods presented in the previous chapter as well as some new ones. Whereas the design and production of a blank book hinges largely on materials and construction methods, printed books pose additional problems of reproduction and assembly. For example, careful planning is required to set up printed pages so that they can be bound together in a signature. Below are questions to consider in deciding what type of book is appropriate for your needs.

**THE STUDIO**
Think of an artist's book as a miniature gallery, a portable environment for the pictures it contains.

**PLANNING YOUR BOOK**
- Do the pages need to lie flat when the book is open?
- How many books do you need, and how many pages will there be?
- Does the book need to be lightweight for mailing?
- How much handwriting is involved in producing the book?
- Will you be binding single sheets, multiple signatures, or French folders?
- Does the book need to be durable?
- Do you need to print on two sides of each page?
- What is the budget?

*Artist: Alexis Peskine
Photograph: Nancy Froehlich*
THE LYRICIST  Roshan Gurusinghe is a production artist by day and lyricist/musician by night. He writes lyrics for the Seattle bands, baby I love you and "Booker Brown." Roshan wanted to present his lyrics in the format of a book. He needed at least 300 copies for various projects, and he wanted to be able to produce more books as needed. A photocopied, saddle-wired booklet was an economical solution.

A saddle wire is a metal stitch (like a staple) placed through the center fold of a single signature. Copy centers provide this service, or you can do it yourself with a long-necked stapler, available at office supply stores.

Saddle-wired books lie flat when opened. For the best results, keep your page count under twenty-four pages, otherwise the book will bow open around the center spread. Saddle wiring can only be used to bind a single-signature book. If you don’t want the wire to show, make a paper book jacket to wrap around the cover.

When preparing files for a saddle-wired book, you must arrange your pages in printer’s spreads (see Newsletter chapter), because when the pages are folded and bound together, they will be in a different order from how they are designed on screen (except for the center spread). This process is also called imposition, the arrangement of pages for printing.

Photocopying is an affordable printing method for a relatively short-run project like this one. You can achieve a sophisticated effect by substituting standard photocopy paper with more interesting papers. We used an off-white textured card stock for the cover and a lighter-weight off-white paper for the text block. We inserted end sheets made of tinted vellum between the cover and the text block, offering an element of surprise, variation, and color as the reader opens the book.
THE PAINTER  Lori Larusso's recent body of work has two distinct aspects. Some of her work looks at the systematic makeup of stereotypical middle America. As a culture, we set up systems that we simultaneously disrupt, both negatively (through abuse of power and misdistribution of wealth) and positively (through free will, protest, and reciprocity). The second half of Lori's work takes the form of small, glossy paintings of petty indulgences. These images welcome the viewer's need for frivolous and immediate satisfaction within consumer culture.

Lori wanted to produce a self-promotional piece that would simultaneously show these related themes and yet keep them distinct. She needed ten books to distribute to curators and for grant proposals. An accordion-fold book mirrors the "two-fold" nature of Lori's work by permitting two bodies of work to exist separately, printed on opposite sides of the page, yet contained within one book. Reproducing her paintings demanded attention to color. We carefully monitored the output from our inkjet printer and adjusted our print settings to keep the color of the prints as close as possible to the color of the paintings.

The accordion fold allows the book to function both as a poster and a book. The viewer can look at the work as one long spread or flip through page by page just like a standard book. The first page of the piece can serve as the cover, or you can attach heavier-weight covers to the front and back as an additional feature (as we did here). The covers of Lori's book were screen-printed on chipboard and then attached using Xyron permanent adhesive.
THE MIXED MEDIA ARTIST  Alexis Peskine is an artist from Paris who wants to promote his work to galleries in New York. The book needs to be easy to carry around and inexpensive to mail. The solution was a 5 x 5-inch portfolio with metal binding studs that mimic the dots and nails he uses in his work.

To make the book easier to open, we sandwiched sheets of translucent vellum paper between back-to-back pairs of color prints. The vellum sheets are an inch or so longer than the prints, creating a flexible hinge towards the spine of the book. We punched holes through the vellum hinge, and we used binding studs to hold the sheets together (see previous chapter). This method allows for more flexibility when turning the page.

Design and photography: Nancy Froehlich

THE PHOTOGRAPHER  Nancy Froehlich's portfolio ranges from hard portraits to fashion photography to landscapes from all over the world. She wanted to present each body of work as a separate series.

We divided Nancy's work into collections and created a set of promotional books to leave behind with potential clients. By categorizing her work with broad titles such as "people" and "landscapes," she will be able to update and produce more books as her portfolio grows.

Nancy will be using her home equipment to print each book, so we chose a simple D.I.Y. binding method and added a little customization. Her books are coil-bound (see previous chapter), but the back cover is 1 1/2 times the length of the open book. The back cover wraps around to the front and forms a spine that conceals the coil.