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Volume 5, Number 3

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Book Store: Congress Materials 2022

<https://bookplate.org>

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The Bookplate Buzz



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The Bookplate Buzz: Volume 5, Number 3

BUILDING WORLD FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH THE "EXCHANGE" OF ART

Peeking Under the Covers

Greetings, Friends of Ex Libris!

On Wednesday evening, April 10th, I attended the annual meeting of FABS Trustees via **Zoom**. It worked so well that it felt like an in-person event! This is the platform that can connect us all. If you own a computer, **please sign up for a Zoom** account at <https://zoom.us>. Then drop me a line to let me know, and we can coordinate an international meeting and exchange. You don't have to leave the comfort of your home to build your collection!



Ex Libris for FISAE 2022: San Francisco - Golden Gate-Psychedelic Rock
Marianna Antonacci, C3 + C5, Italy (page 4)

Time is running out! The future of the bookplate begins right here with the ASBC&D!!

Everything starts in San Francisco! On pages 2 and 3, you will read our 10-year plan that Claudia Smukler and James Keenan drafted. We will build a nationwide "movement" with your support. This has been clearly outlined in our publications for the last 20 years. **Now is the time!** It's up to our members and friends - we cannot create this campaign without you!!

October's print issue will not come out until late November, early December since I will be traveling. I will make every effort to send October's electronic newsletter in November. In the October issue you will read a full report on the global XL FISAE Congress held in Mallorca, Spain. Hang tight!

We welcome your stories! Don't be shy, please send your feedback.

Thank you for your critical support! Excelsior! CHEERS!! James Keenan

PLEASE WRITE TODAY: info@bookplate.org

Ten-Year Development Plan for The American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers

We will build the campaign with your support!

INTRODUCTION

The Director, James P. Keenan, of the American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers proposes the formation of a working group to help create a multi-year development plan for the nonprofit.

The participants would meet to discuss ways to secure the considerable bookplate collection into the next decade. They will review current programs and publications, provide ideas on some key questions, and develop an action plan to manage the priorities of the organization.

We invite the San Francisco Bay Area representatives, other members of ASBC&D, and people from strategic community organizations to convene in 2024 and for the period of time adequate to finalize a plan to address some key questions for the organization.

KEY QUESTIONS

The organization will need new sources of funds and/or institutional support in order to secure the collection long term.
What is current state of the collection? What options are there?

How can the organization better understand the needs of the current membership? Who are they and what do they want, how do they engage with the organization?

How can we support the broader artistic community to consider bookplates as an important cultural expression worthy of preservation and better promote contemporary bookplate commissions and designs?

What can be done to increase the appreciation of the benefits of bookplate collecting to a new generation of enthusiasts?
Why might they want to join the organization?

Is the San Francisco Bay Area with its concentration of Book Arts enthusiasts and activities, and affiliated organizations the most promising region for the ASBC&D to establish permanent roots?

What is the current management structure of the ASBC&D and what changes should be made to improve administration of the plan's future priorities.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP

These suggested participants are invited to meet (in-person and virtually).

James P. Keenan, Director
 Christopher Kent, Advisor, ASBC&D
 Grendl Löfkvist, Necropolis, American Printing History Association
 Norman McKnight, Philoxenia Press
 Keith Cranmer, Artist-Engraver
 Richard Wagener, Mixolydian Editions
 Claudia Smukler, NōBē Press
 Anita Engles, American Bookbinders Museum
 Kevin Kosik, Book Club of California
 Andrea Grimes, Special Collections, San Francisco Public Library

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

American Bookbinders Museum (ABM)
 American Library Association (ALA)
 Bancroft Library & Museum, University of California at Berkeley
 Book Club of California
 Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS)
 International Federation of Ex Libris Societies (FISAE)
 Keith Wingrove Memorial Trust, Melbourne, Australia, Australian Bookplate Society
 San Francisco Public Library, Special Collections
 Victoria University at Wellington, New Zealand

ORGANIZATION PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Review new and current priorities and then rank them for their ability to support the development plan.

Membership Development

There are over 300 global recipients of our publications

- Art Collectors and Bibliophiles
- Artists and Designers
- Bookplate commissioners, enthusiasts
- Institutional support

The Bookplate Collection

Currently the collection numbers in the hundreds of thousands with new acquisitions and donations coming in regularly.

The collection is located in Tucson, Arizona

- New Acquisitions and Donations
- Maintenance

Fundraising Campaigns

- New revenue potential
- Grants and Legacy Donations
- Administrative Budget and Projections
- In-person and virtual Workshops and Speakers

Website Development

- Redesign and Functionality
- Management and Ongoing Operations

Print Publications

- Newsletter, quarterly
- Year Book, annual
- Artist Directories & Exhibition Catalogs

Bookplate Design Competitions

Tribute to George Steiner Design Competition, 2020

Catalogue/Artist Directory Production; Online Exhibition

Exhibition and Opening Celebration at the Book Club of California 2022

James Joyce *Ulysses* Design Competition 2022 (Entries received, 2024 exhibition)

Catalog/Artist Directory Production; Online Exhibition

Exhibition and Opening Celebration at the American Bookbinders Museum

Truman Capote *Breakfast at Tiffany's* Design Competition 2024 (Entries received, 2025 Exhibition)

Catalog/Artist Directory Production; Online Exhibition

Exhibition and Opening Celebration at the Book Club of California

Future Competitions

Traveling Exhibitions

Sponsorship opportunities

Public Education and Communication

Request new ideas and collaborations, encourage participation, and look for support.

Communicate to members and the wider communities of interest about the organization's plan for the future of the ASBC&Ds collection, publications, competitions, education, and exhibitions.

Outreach through Virtual Presentations and Social Media

Bookplate.org/*Zoom*
 Facebook
 Instagram
 Linked-In
 Twitter
 Pinterest
 Flickr

Trade shows

American Library Association Expos
 CODEX Foundation Book Arts
 ABAA - Antiquarian Book Fairs
 Small Graphics Expos
 Ephemera Shows

Advertising campaigns

American Libraries Magazine
 (ALA monthly)
Library Journal (Media Source)
American Artist Magazine
Graphis Magazine
Print Magazine
FABS Quarterly Journal



The Ex Libris Prints of Marianna Antonacci

Since I was a child, I have been fascinated by the countless illustrations of the "Corriere dei Piccoli" by Walter Molino's caricatures and by the Ex libris, an extraordinary miniature. I have known them since I used to look through my grandfather's books in the attic or in his library in Alberobello.

There were all kinds of objects here, but above all, there were ancient books of all sizes, with precious and rare bindings on canvas and golden titles (which I still jealously preserve today).

It is in one of these volumes, extracted from the library and subtracted from the company of the other books, that I met an Ex Libris for the first time.

I remember the phrase "Hic liber est meus" exclusively aimed at returning the book.

Earlier this year, I enjoyed an email correspondence with Marianna Antonacci as we gathered information for her story. I often attach a photo of my 1968 Volkswagen Beetle. Marianna replied with a photo of her Classic Volkswagen Beetle, Maggiolino, from 1975. We made an instant connection!



Marianna's Classic 1975 Volkswagen Beetle - Maggiolino.



Well known photo. Taken in Solano Estates in Tucson by Heinrich Scheffer from Austria.

I realized that the small, fine-grained piece of paper pasted on the reference page of the book that I found in the other volumes was a printed reproduction of a precious piece of paper with a fine drawing multiplied as many times as the number of books owned by my grandfather. It carried a precise design, a "Libra" symbol of equity, and the family motto, corresponding to the linear and soft style of Art Nouveau.

I realized that the slightly ivory sheet of laid paper **told the story of a book belonging to a family of books and, therefore, to a family of people.**

The choice of the Artistic High School and then the Academy of Fine Arts in the beautiful, fascinating, and unique city of Lecce was determined by a natural attraction to art and the search for how to create matrices that can multiply images.

And here is the alchemical experience of "**etching**," whose primary role is played by the **mordants and etches on the amorphous metal plate.**

But the Matrix must be carefully prepared to withstand the violent action of the mordant.



Illustration 1



Illustration 2

This is the most fascinating moment, the most delicate and dangerous one of the entire Etching: when the plate modified in its original structure generates images that materialize themselves in dots, hatches, and crossings—strong or delicate contrasts—in the articulated game between black and white.

Matrix and acid enter into synergy and contrast in a struggle for the supremacy of the sign.

That sign that was not there before is now present, and it becomes a sort of witness and interpreter of the culture, history, and life of every man in every country.

Moving to Rome in the late 1980s, I regained my artistic vocation. I participated in national and international Ex Libris competitions, and I had the opportunity to tell, interpret, and reveal my secrets. Over the years, my publications have appeared in catalogs, and I have received awards, honorable mentions, or reports for originality and merit.

Marianna Antonacci welcomes commissions. You may write to her directly:

Address via Francesco Berni, 5
Postal Code 00185
City ROMA
Country ITALIA
E-mail mantonacci94@gmail.com

Flight Test

Desire to soar, hovering in mid-air in the human mind

Marianna Antonacci

The Themes developed in my bookplates are different, but the technique is always the same: **etching**.

The making of the etching is an engraving process that takes place in a specific time and manner.

The most critical moment of the whole process is the time and type of acid etching.

It is a crucial moment when a substantial change in the plate occurs using the acid:

The metal from an amorphous element is modified and becomes a generating matrix.

The raw metal is charged with signs through which the artist expresses himself by giving them different meanings and interpretations.

The sign is the proper language of etching, and it can restore the diversity of black and gray, thanks to the innumerable and different situations of acid etching.

The creative part is based on in-depth knowledge of the required topic readings, books, and newspaper articles.

In my composition, the human figure is often embedded in complex geometric elaborations that serve as the background.

I draw directly on the plate, and there are subtle guidelines to set the composition.

When I have finished one of my creations, I close my eyes and then begin to dream again.

I tell sound and silences,
words and pause,
time and space...

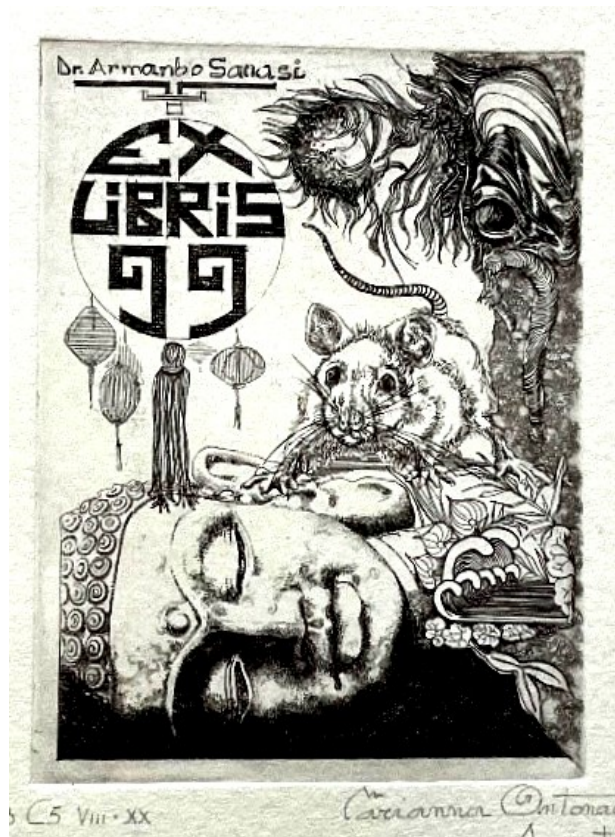


Illustration 3



Illustration 4

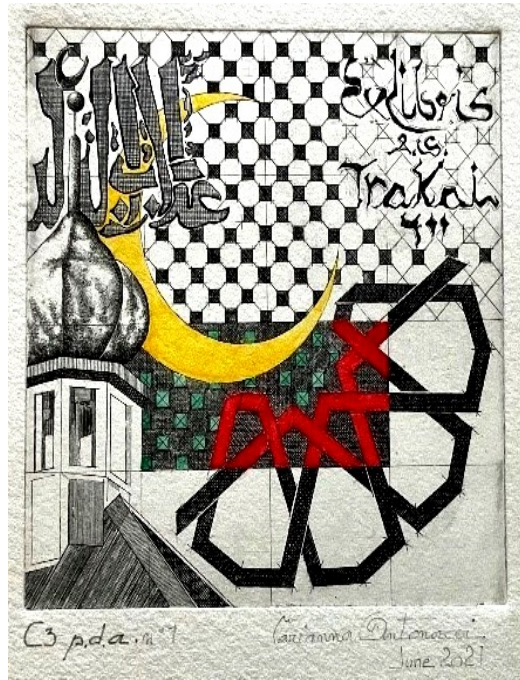


Illustration 5

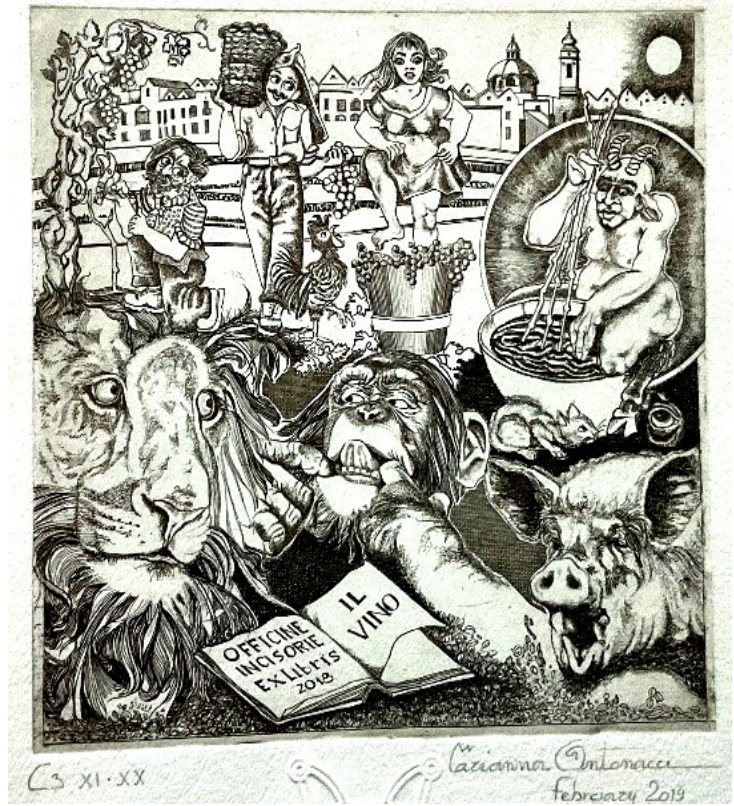


Illustration 6



Illustration 7

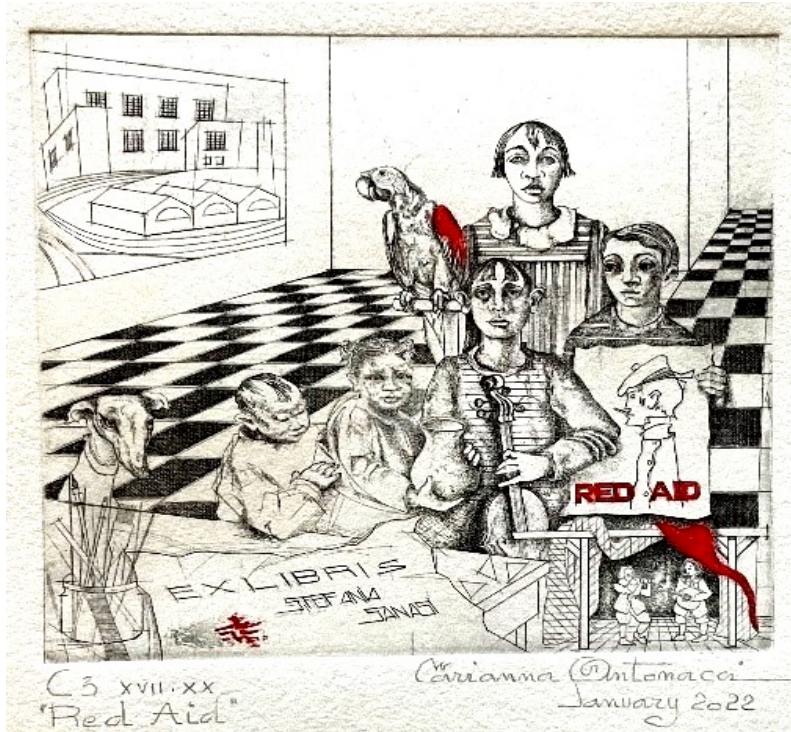


Illustration 8



Illustration 9



Illustration 10



Illustration 11

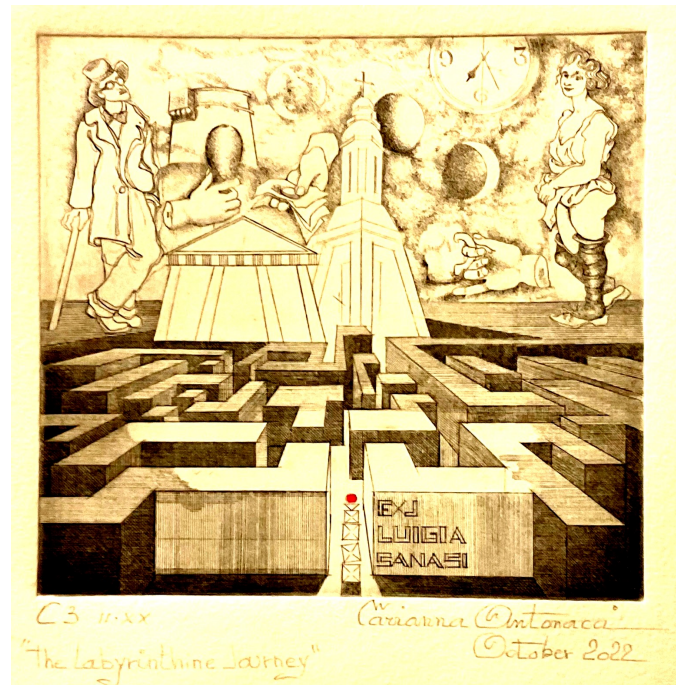


Illustration 12

Marianna Antonacci Ex Libris Illustrations

Front Page: C3, 2022; Luigia Sanasi; American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers. Congresso FISAE 2022 September, San Francisco; *Golden Gate - Psychedelic Rock*; 101x90mm.

Illustration 1 - C3, 2018; Stefania Sanasi per Laurea in Farmacia; *Serotonina - Happy Pills*; 150 x 180 mm

Illustration 2 - C3, 2019; Brigitte Esche; *Épater la Bourgeoisie*; 150 x 120 mm

Illustration 3 - C3+C5, 2019 - **Honorable Mention** - Hong Kong China Ex libris Federation; Ex libris 99 - *YEAR OF THE RAT*; Armando Sanasi; 115x90 mm

Illustration 4 - C3, 2019 - **First Prize** - Officine Incisorie - ROMA - Ex libris In Fabula Seconda Edizione Concorso; *Tell me a story*; 140 mm

Illustration 5 - C3 - 2022 - **Honorable Mention** - Trakai 700 Competition in search of identity; *Un cadeau pour la Mosquée Trakai*; 120mm

Illustration 6 - C3 - 2021; Farmacia Tobagi, Roma; *Dante's Purgatory - Pope Martino IV and the eels of lake Bolsena, the forbidden fruit*; 90x130mm

Illustration 7 - C3+C5, 2019; Farmacie Sanasi - Giussano, Aurelia, Giglioli - ROMA; *Getting sick of Poverty*; 90x150 mm

Illustration 8 - C3, 2022 - **First Prize**; Stefania Sanasi; Vogeler, 150 Worpsswede, Germany - *RED AID*; 120x128mm

Illustration 9 - C3, 2022; *Birds of the World, Sky Wanderers*; Olesnicka Biblioteka Publizna Mikolaja, Reja - PL; *My mosaic tile is the GREYLAG goose*; 120X170mm

Illustration 10 - C3, 2022; *Bosco Stregato*; Associazione Solstizio d'Estate; *Fiction, Ambiguous, Mysterious, Eerie feeling*; 170x130

Illustration 11 - C3, 2022; Armando Sanasi; American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers Competition: *ULYSSES*, James Joyce, 1922-2022; *Molly, her circular thoughts, her mental traps*; 122x140 mm

Illustration 12 - C3, 2022; Luigia Banas; American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers Competition: *ULYSSES*, James Joyce, 1922-2022; *The Labyrinthine Journey*; 125x135 mm

Bookplates for the Children

Peter H. Hiller

The legacy of Joseph Jacinto 'Jo' Mora (1876-1947) is a deep, engaging and varied one. From the time he was a young child under the tutelage of his artist and sculptor father Domingo and older brother, Luis, a painter, Jo was ever creative. His artistic accomplishments stand out for their variety of mediums, outstanding quality, expansive subject matter, accessible nature, and playful humor. It is rare that an individual artist would excel as a painter, sculptor, illustrator, pictorial cartographer, cartoonist, print maker, architect, photographer, designer, and author.

It seems logical that a person whose creativity includes writing and illustrating books that became Book of the Month Club selections, would also appreciate the fine art of bookplates. Jo Mora was such a person and also as the father of two children that he loved dearly and treated very equally, what better way to show his pride in them, and encourage them to read, than by creating bookplates in their honor.

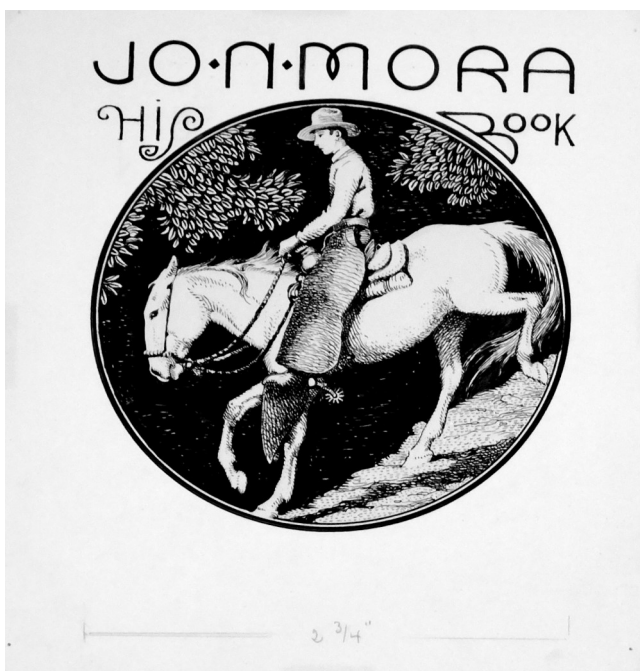
The older of Jo's two children, with his wife Grace Needham Mora, was his son, Jo Jr. who deeply loved and embraced many of his father's loves including all matters related to the American cowboy. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the visual depiction on Jo Jr's. bookplate would be a portrait of him aboard one of the family's horses.

In celebration of his daughter's creative abilities, Jo pictured his daughter Patty sitting at the piano, a place she was very comfortable. Patty's musical abilities were accomplished enough that she offered public recitals in the town's music hall.

Through the good fortune of an appreciative mother, Grace kept the original pen and ink drawings Jo drew with faint pencil measurements – 2 ¾" - indicating the final printed width of what would become the final printed bookplates. These drawings were also used to indicate the exact image that would be cast in lead and mounted on a letterpress sized block for the printing of the bookplates.

Should this small example of the world of Jo Mora spark any curiosity on your part as a reader of this story, an extensive biography about him – *The Life and Times of Jo Mora: Iconic Artist of the American West*, by this articles author, is available wherever good books are sold. This book serves to enlighten readers about perhaps the most interesting person you have never heard of.

Jo Mora's original pen and ink drawings destined to become bookplates for his children. Image courtesy of the Monterey History and Art Association.





**“Bring me the sunflower, let me plant it in my field
parched by the salt sea wind...” Eugenio Montale**

Victoria University at Wellington, New Zealand and

American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers

Take pleasure in announcing the Bookplate Competition for 2025

“Ossi di seppia•Cuttlefish Bones” by Eugenio Montale (1896-1981)

The year 2025 marks 100 years since “Ossi di seppia•Cuttlefish Bones” was published by the Italian Nobel Laureate Eugenio Montale (1896-1981)

For Competition Rules, please visit us at – <https://bookplate.org>



Always Looking for Bookplate Collections!



Do you have a box of bookplates gathering dust in your attic? Unearthed a small collection built by a family member? These may be loose, mounted, or in a scrapbook. Perhaps you have a file drawer with a surplus of duplicates. Or simply a change in your collecting interests. It may come as a surprise, but we receive notes about discoveries like this regularly. The ASBC&D has a keen interest in building an important collection to share with future generations.

We recently received several hundred antique bookplates in an old shoe box!

Wherever you may find them, let us know. Need an appraisal? Enjoy the benefits of tax relief through donation. We purchase, exchange, and accept charitable donations of bookplates, books on the subject, and any related material.

Your donated collection will serve to advance the public’s awareness of the art form. Since the ASBC&D initiated this campaign, we have received more than 30 collections.

The Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to further the art and study of bookplates.

Inquiries invited. Please write to: info@bookplate.org ~~~~ Please visit us at: <https://bookplate.org>

Wood engraving by Valentin Le Campion (1903-1952) Russian-French



After 575 Years, Support the Future for Bookplate Art - <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-renaissance-of-bookplate-art> ~ OR ~ Donate directly through our website - <https://bookplate.org/donate>.

Wire transfers? Please write. The ASBC&D gratefully accepts ALL methods of payment! Thank you!!



“What I’ve found does the most good is just to get into a taxi and go to Tiffany’s.” Holly Golightly



Victoria University at Wellington, New Zealand and

American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers

Take pleasure in announcing the *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* Bookplate Competition 2024

The Centenary Celebration of Truman Capote (1924-2024)

Printmakers from around the world participated in our Annual Bookplate Competition. The year 2024 is the celebration of the centenary of Truman Capote (1924-1984). Truman Capote was an American novelist, screenwriter, playwright, and actor. Several short stories, novels, and plays are praised literary classics, including his 1958 novella *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*.

The TOP 30 finalists will receive global talent exposure through the virtual exhibition and online artist directory. There will be an in-person exhibition in San Francisco, and following the debut, the show will be available for nationwide touring. In our tradition, first-, second-, and third-place artists will receive cash prizes. The top 30 finalists with multiple entries will have these shown in the exhibitions.

“BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY’S” TOP 30 ENTRIES

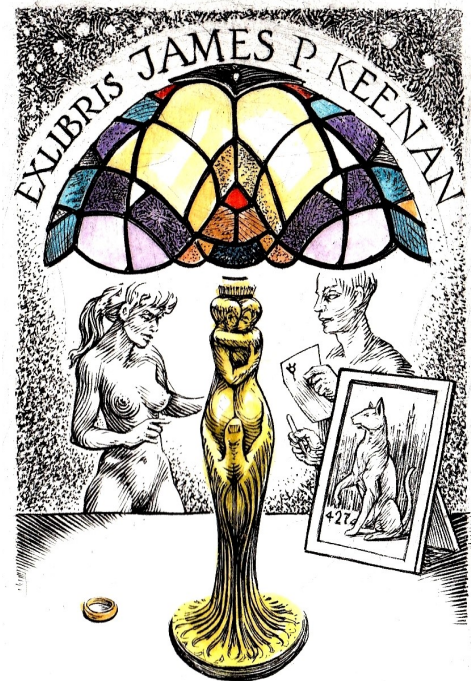
1- Frank Ivo Van Damme - C2 - 105x77mm - Belgium - selected by Dr Yuanyuan Liang, Truman Capote Scholar, Victoria University at Wellington, New Zealand & Beijing, China.

The Ex Libris I have selected as my top pick, first caught my eye for its well-chosen palette of colours as well as the clarity and impact of its composition. The exquisite ‘blank’ space left by the artist not only gives the eye a chance to appreciate the artwork without feeling overwhelmed, but it also enables the mind to ‘breathe’ while deciphering the multilayered, poignant messages conveyed.

Indeed, this bookplate offers a delicate plate of food for thought. For example, the stylish lamp, with the light switched on, conjures up a scene and a sense of sleeplessness; yet it also offers a note of hope for life, thus evoking of the oft-quoted line from Holly’s song: “Don’t wanna sleep, Don’t wanna die.”

Moreover, the upper part of the lamp handle, shaped like a naked couple, could refer to Holly and her Brazilian fiancé who abandons her at the end of the story – hence the lonely ring placed on the left side of the picture. The unrecognizable facial features of the ‘lamp-couple’ further suggest that eventually the romantic relationship is destined to fade out in memory. And the framed photo of the cat too... another layer of allusion and meaning.

In conclusion, I was very impressed by the artist’s craftsmanship – how he has effectively and elegantly interwoven storylines and symbols, achieving a neat and nuanced artwork that, I believe, does justice to Truman Capote’s genius for storytelling and especially for his iconic and immortal *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*. A fitting centenary celebration of one of the greatest writers of our time.



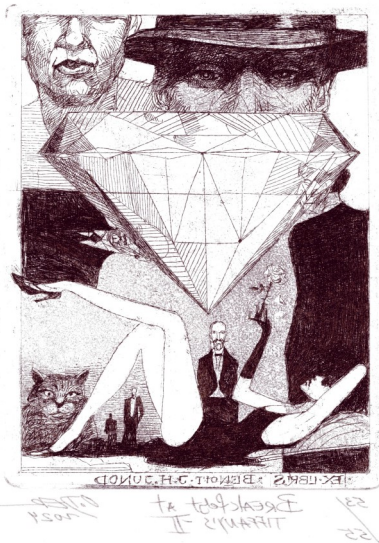
If you are interested in commissioning any of the artists, please do not hesitate to write for contact information: info@bookplate.org



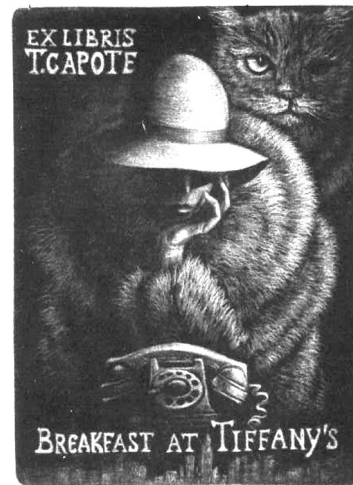
2 - L - Deborah Chapman -
Time - C7+C2 -
110x75mm - Canada



3 - R - Nurgül Arıkan - CGD
90x90mm - Turkey



4 - L - Oleg Dergachov -
C3 - 150x110mm - France



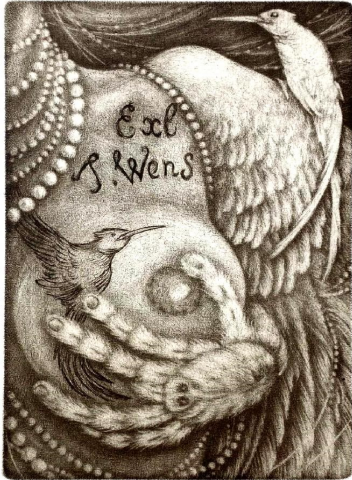
5 - R - Igor Kashinskiy -
C7 - 99x73mm - USA



6 - L - Mauricio Schvarzman
- X3 - 120x85mm -
Argentina



7 - R - Galina Pavlova -
CGD - 130x130mm -
Bulgaria



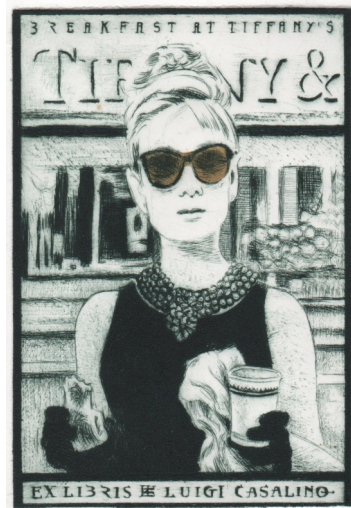
8 - L - Iurii Aleksandrov - C3 - 120x75mm - Slovakia



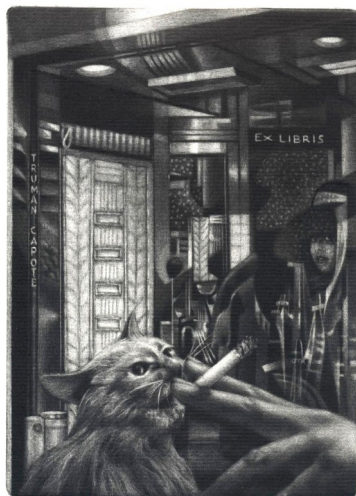
9 - R - K. M. Bak - CGD - 75x57mm - Poland



10 - L - Eleonora Gershanovych - CGD - 73x37mm - Germany



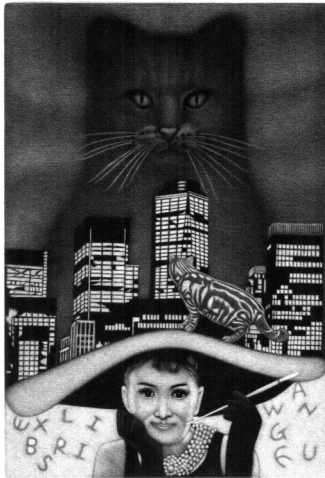
11 - R - Luigi Casalino, - C3 - 147x104mm - Italy



12 - L - Ivo Mosele - C7 - 130x100mm - Italy

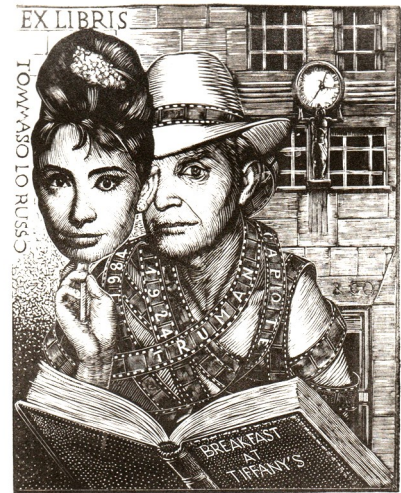


13 - R - Ruslan Agirba - C3 - 140x125mm - Ukraine



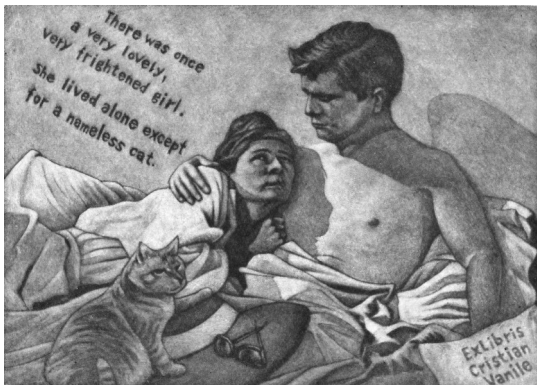
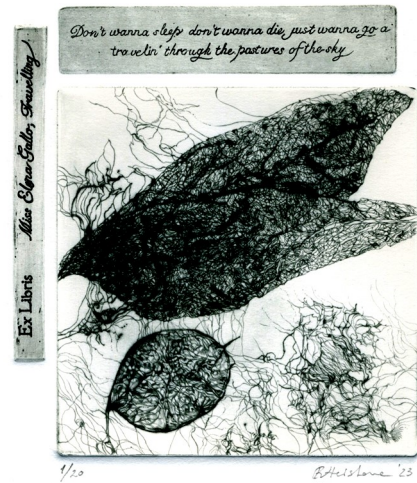
14 - L - Yu Wang - C7 -
115x80mm - China

15 - R - Valerio Mezzetti -
X2 - 120x98mm - Italy



16 - L - Claude Svetlana -
X3 - 80x172mm -
France

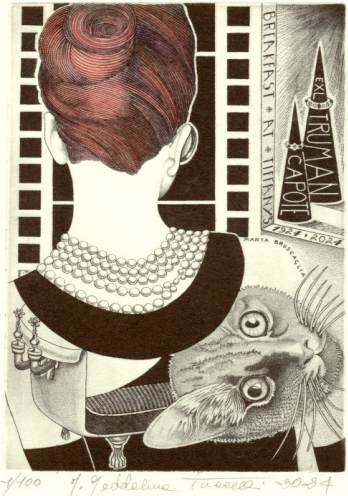
17 - R - Evgeniya Hristova -
Miss Elena Gallo -
*Don't wanna sleep,
Don't wanna die -
Traveling* - C3 -
130x125mm - Italy



18 - L - Michele Stragliati -
C7 - 122x160mm -
Italy

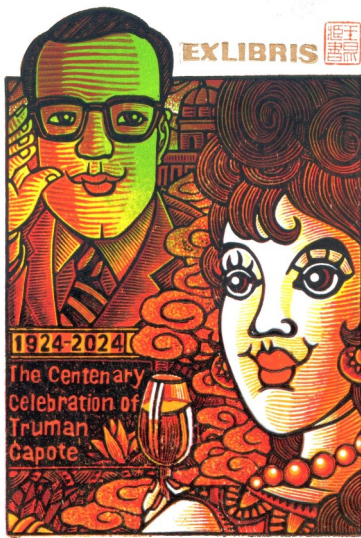
19 - R - Joan Pujol I Ros -
CGD - 143x98mm -
Spain





20 - L - Maria Maddelena Tuccelli - C2 - 122x80mm - Italy

21 - R - Bai Wen Lu - C3-C5 - 100x100mm - China



22 - L - Wang Kun - X3 - 230x150mm - China

23 - R - Claudia Garcia - CGD - 115x75mm - Argentina



24 - L - Gianna Alexopoulou - X1 - 150x100mm - Greece

25 - R - Oleg Omelchenko - CAD - 150x125mm - Ukraine





26 L - Nubia Ozzi - *We did belong to each other* - C8+X6 - 100x130mm - Argentina



27 - R - Altair Altaev - X3 - 140x90mm - Kazakhstan



28 - L - Ramis Aibussinov - X3 - 128x99mm - Kazakhstan

29 - R - Irene Marchello - C3 - 90x70mm - Italy



30 L - Maria Gurikhina - C3 - *Stranger* - 100x100mm - Spain

American Railroad Man: William Alfred Webb An Australian Correspondent

The minimalistic bookplates of William Alfred Webb reveal almost nothing about this fascinating American railroad man.

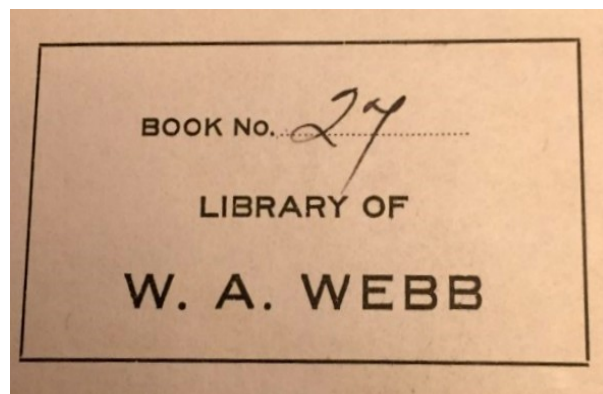
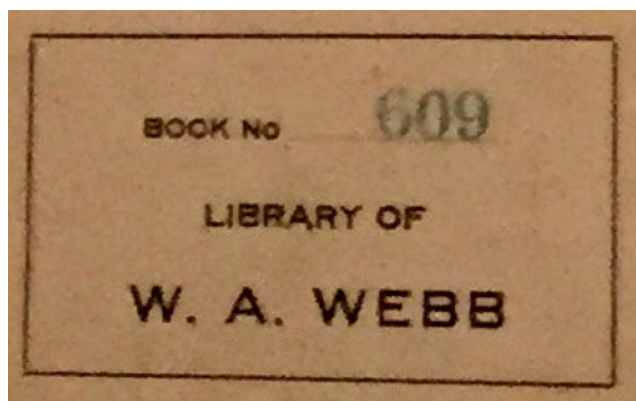
In Denver in 1909, the recently remarried 31-year-old Webb ordered a batch of simple bookplates to corral his collection of a few hundred volumes. Far from ornate — a complex design based on locomotives and railroad tracks would perhaps suggest itself — they reflect a quiet dignity, as befitting the mind behind this library. As can be best discerned from the few surviving volumes, the lowest-numbered titles were published in 1909, while the books with the highest number (609) were published in the late 1800s. No books with this plate have yet been found published after 1909. The numbers were handwritten at first, but later, they were stamped. Titles cover the era's classics: Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, Washington Irving, Abraham Lincoln, Rudyard Kipling and Shakespeare's works. Some items originated from the Youth's Companion, and others from the 1880s or earlier were likely sourced from Webb's bookseller Uncle Isaac B Young in Connersville, Indiana.

Why he started marking his books this way in 1909 is a mystery. It may well have been instigated by his new wife, Alice. She was the darling of Denver society and an accomplished singer. While Webb was no wallflower — he paid extra each year to have his name highlighted in the Denver City Directory despite sharing his surname with less than three inches of the city's population — he may have found his circle of social acquaintances expanding. Consequently, the number of dinners and parties at his house may have skyrocketed. Indeed, Alice was a much better match than his first wife, Lillie, whom he divorced on the grounds of cruelty in 1906 after five years of marriage. Social gatherings with Lillie were recipes for awkwardness, humiliation and disaster.

Having the time to focus on his library may have been created because his career was entering the doldrums. As the assistant to the senior vice president of the Colorado & Southern Railway, later adding purchasing officer (also known, with a dash of passive/aggressiveness, as the 'preventer of purchases') to his resume, the railroad had recently been bought by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, a much larger company. His star shone less brightly under the new owners, who wanted to consolidate. Reading the writing on the wall, in 1911, Webb would negotiate a new future with his former mentor, Frank Trumbull, the President of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad (among others), and be given his very own train set, the Texas Central Railway, based in Waco. The rest, as they say, is history as his career accelerated skywards.

Should members recognise this plate in their collections, please get in touch and advise me of the plate number, title, date, and any dedication the book may have. Any title covering railroad subjects would be of great interest.

Please write to James P. Keenan at: info@bookplate.org. (On behalf of a correspondent based in Australia who is writing Webb's biography).



A Curious Artform

Claudia Smukler

I became a collector because bookplates provide an accessible window into other peoples' lives. They often depict bookshelves stuffed with clues and curiosities of the owner, letting me in on secrets otherwise unavailable. Searching the owner's name can be a history lesson and studying the designer's work on this very specific miniature canvas provides an opportunity for discovery.

Each collector of bookplates develops their own taste. Early on, I dismissed whole categories. I had difficulty relating to the older armorial styles with their medieval symbols of rank and monarchy. And many decorative name plates just didn't belong in the same category for me as the detailed etchings or the dramatic scale achieved by some woodcut artists. My taste leans toward the hand-crafted mediums of twentieth-century California artists. But over time, I have discovered many delights that were only revealed when I took a magnifying glass and peered into the tiny frame of an *ex libris*.

My recent focus has been on American artist and designer **Beulah Mitchell Clute (1873-1958)** who produced over 80 bookplates in her lifetime. Lydia Beulah Mitchell was born in Rushville Illinois, the oldest child of 7, named after her maternal grandmother. At 19, she left home to study at the New York Art Students' League. When she returned to Illinois, she joined her brother, Clair Wesley and sister, Eunice at the University of Chicago. By 1899, she was the president of the Chicago Art Students' League.

Beulah Mitchell Clute established her reputation as a talented artist in her early work producing many celebrated decorative pen and ink designs frequently published in books and magazines. In the following three bookplates, she uses a similar composition which helps to show the development in the quality and detail she worked to achieve. The designs for **Joseph F Leaming** (*Illustration 1*) and **James Hervy Pratt** (1898) (*Illustration 2*) are typical of her early work, and the one created in 1910 for **Louis Koch Boysen** (*Illustration 3*) with finer detail in the book bindings, the furniture, and lettering is more indicative of her work to come.



L - Illustration 1

R - Illustration 2

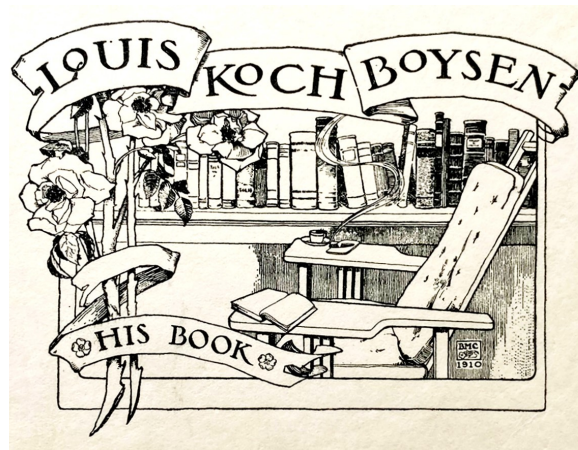
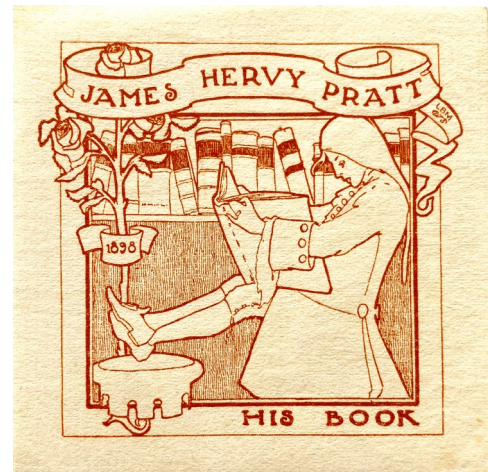


Illustration 3

Beulah married Walter Marshall Clute, a fellow artist, painter, and lecturer at the Chicago Art Institute. In 1903, the couple settled in Park Ridge, Illinois where they nurtured friendships in this suburban enclave often hosting artist friends from Chicago at their studio home, called "The Birches." Their daughter Marjorie Medora was born in 1904 and a cozy homelife was a frequent subject of Walter's paintings. Beulah continued to illustrate books and take bookplate commissions. She started a business called "The Colony Crafts" in Park Ridge with fellow artist, Dulah Evans Krehbiel that featured Arts and Craft-era postcards, holiday greetings, and other creations by local artists.



Illustration 4



Illustration 5

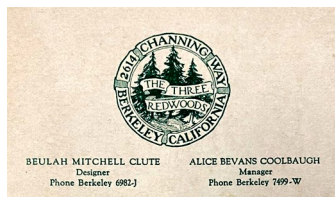
During this period, Beulah made careful study of various genres including the heraldic roots and history of British and European bookplates. Her style shifted away from the purely decorative and she regularly incorporated pictorial elements associated with or requested by the owner. The creation of a canting plate for **Joseph Benjamin Oakleaf** (*Illustration 4*) is a notable commission. It includes a finely wrought wreath of oak leaves around the bust of Abraham Lincoln, the name in a modest architectural frame, fitting choices for the devoted collector of Lincoln memorabilia.

The sheaths of wheat and the North Dakota state seal are included in the bookplate for **Robert Truman Barber** (*Illustration 5*) as is the frontier town name, Wahpeton, a Dakota word meaning "leaf dwellers." A detailed sketch of an impressive two-story frontier home complete with a front and back porch must certainly have pleased the resident. Beulah would continue to feature beloved homes and environments, both interior and exterior scenes, in future bookplates. Other common subjects were flowers and trees and motifs that were fitting and flattering to her clients.

The Move West to California

Despite the warm embrace the Clute's felt from their vibrant midwestern community, Walter Clute's delicate health prompted the family decision to relocate. In early 1915 they moved to the gentler climate of southern California. Sadly however, Walter died shortly after arrival (perhaps from tuberculosis.) The new widow and her 11-year-old daughter traveled north to be with her sister, Eunice and husband, Norman Lehmer, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

There was significant cultural activity in 1915 as the Panama-Pacific International Exposition featured prominently in the Bay Area. She most certainly supported the themes of the fair, modernity and progress and would soon find her footing in Berkeley. She advertised in *The Miscellany* a magazine about bookplates that featured one of her cover designs and she wrote articles, lectured, and participated in many bookplate exhibitions. She cultivated a community of artists and academics much like she had done in Illinois teaming up by 1921 with, Alice Bevans Coolbaugh to open a printing design shop called “The Three Redwoods.”



In California she produced some of her best remembered bookplates, the “designs for schoolmen,” commissions for several prominent Berkeley professors. (I discussed Armin Otto Leuschner’s 1916 bookplate, in *The Bookplate Buzz*, Volume 4, Number 4)



Illustration 6



Illustration 7

A well-documented biographic summary of Beulah Mitchell Clute was published online in 2021. John R. Dolan, a marine biologist and researcher, surveyed 42 of her bookplates. Dolan told me he had little prior interest in bookplates but admired what the artist got right in the distinctive plate for zoologist **Charles Atwood Kofoid** (1865-1947)(*Illustration 6*). His curiosity — and perhaps some pandemic time on his hands — prompted him to read more about her life. The bookplate for the Berkeley scientist accurately depicted microorganisms the zoologist had described and named. The lower half of the design featured a ship at sea with a net trolling the underwater depths for plankton. The organisms, Dolan confirmed, were recognizable as samples gathered by Kofoid during his 1901 expedition to the South Pacific.

The bookplate for entomologist **Edward Oliver Essig** (1884-1964)(*Illustration 7*) completes the schoolmen trilogy. A masterpiece of organization, the design shows Essig at his desk, peering through his microscope surrounded by books, a specimen case, and portraits of his mentors, with a view out the window of the Berkeley Campanile. There is also a cabin in the mountains, his award-winning irises, university seals, and honor societies. Beulah caps off the design of his accomplishments with specimens of flying bugs, crawling beetles, and two grasshoppers facing off.

Beulah created several equally impressive designs for university-educated women. The **Editha Webster Johnston** (*Illustration 8*) plate includes the University of Toronto seal along with a three masted vessel, Dolan surmised, is the *Jennie Johnston* which brought Irish immigrants to Canada.

A Sierra Nevada scene with a bursting waterfall and towering redwoods in the **Helen Louise Frankel** (*Illustration 9*) bookplate is accompanied by the seal from Wellesley College.



Illustration 8

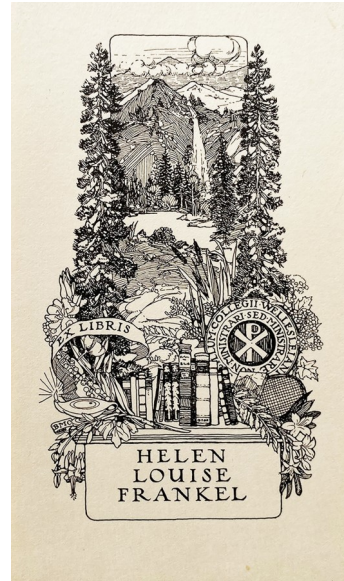


Illustration 9

Beulah first designed a bountiful floral bookplate for the young **Martha Barker Alexander** (*Illustration 10*) that is sometimes found brightly hand colored. When Martha married Frank Gerbode, Beulah was commissioned to design a pair of new bookplates for this accomplished Bay Area couple.

Frank Leven Albert Gerbode (1907-1984) (*Illustration 11*) was a third-generation Californian. His grandfather came to California from Germany during the goldrush. His father started a construction business in Placerville and Frank was expected to work alongside him. He ventured off to San Francisco instead and subsequently began to study medicine at Stanford where he met and later married Martha Alexander. He became a celebrated surgeon, the first to perform open heart surgery in the West.



Illustration 10

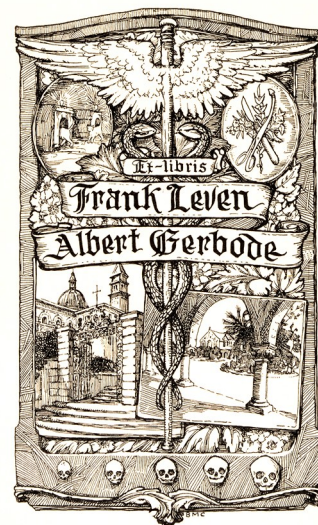


Illustration 11

Martha Barker Alexander Gerbode (1909-1971) (*Illustration 12*) was the daughter of a wealthy businessman who cultivated sugarcane and extracted considerable resources from Hawaii before it was a state. Martha Alexander was an observant and empathetic young adult, well educated and independent. She lived on her own for a while in San Francisco. She married Walter Gerbode, a man of modest means while he was still a student at Stanford.

Friends described her as a woman of her time with a robust sense of personal responsibility who felt an obligation to improve conditions for people and preserve the natural environment. She played a significant role in the philanthropic development of the Bay Area. She started the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, named for her son who died in an automobile accident. The World Affairs Council, Institute of Pacific Relations, Planned Parenthood, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, and The Art and Ecology Institute in Hawaii are just some of the organizations she touched.

A large estate and a mountainous location are pictured in her bookplate along with a few bars of musical notation. Martha Alexander authored a music score and words for a class song in 1928 for the Mt. Vernon Seminary. This detail of her life, passed on to us in her bookplate, appears in the oral history documents on the Gerbodes archived at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library.

The caduceus is the central symbol in Frank Gerbode's plate, along with his surgical tools, and a Stanford campus scene that appears in both Martha and Frank's *ex libris*. Peering closely with my magnifying glass, I had to ask, what is up with the curious depiction of two cats in the corner? It turns out, Frank Gerbode is that guy! Indeed, he is the original herder of cats! (*Illustration 13*)

Frank explains that his first research project that was an experiment in conditioned reflexes.

"It was like Pavlov's experiment, and it was to teach cats to go a certain way through a maze. I had to construct a maze and train them in avoiding certain turns to get at the food."

Looking even closer at the extraordinary bookplate for the doctor, one can only imagine what story he must have told Beulah for her to lineup five human skulls along the bottom.

Books, oral histories, and all manner of detailed research chronicle the history of a person's life. Included in the list of sources is a particular and curious artform, the *ex libris*. They are far more than a name plate. They are a revealing gesture, the rendering of a personality, an artform that links our humanity. The *ex libris* brings us together, the commissioner, the artist, the reader, and all those who make, or borrow, or collect, and cherish their books. While each of us has a name, a history, accomplishments, and dreams, our superpower—is empathy—the ability to connect to each other, to reach beyond ourselves and our time to future generations. Bookplate collecting and the deeply human stories they provoke, remind me of that truth.

The author welcomes comments and reflections from readers at csmukler@gmail.com

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank Glennis Briggs and Lauchian Divine, great granddaughters of Walter and Beulah Clute, for their generosity and willingness on several occasions to share family memories—and bookplates—with me.

References upon request.



Illustration 12



Illustration 13



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A Seaworthy Bookplate

JoAnne Fuerst

So, with the book-plate collector; from his point of view the book-plate links countries, governments, and individuals between whom in the life may have been bitterest feeling, strongest opposition... Thus, then, does the collector find a true delight in preserving his memorials of the past, and a pleasure in showing to such others as care to see the charm of the book-plate. Charles Dexter Allen ¹

Your fellow collector writing here does truly appreciate thoroughly - contemporary bookplate design. *The Chronicle* and *The Bookplate Buzz* tantalize with the imaginative and exquisitely artistic work of so many living artists. The bookplates pictured would, any of them, find a welcome home with me. However, as you surely have realized by now, my true *desiderata* are antiquarian bookplates, especially those with a story to tell. So, here is another tale from history.

Once again the story begins in Maine. At the northeasternmost edge of the United States, we have always been a seafaring people. From indigenous canoes to steel submarines, over the centuries we have built them all. The Nineteenth Century was our Golden Age. Regarding Maine's shipbuilding tradition it has been written: "Outstanding were the Sewalls, who turned out 105 vessels between 1823 and 1903 for their own use alone, in addition to a number of vessels for other owners."² Presented for your viewing pleasure: the bookplate of Harold Marsh Sewall by Sidney Lawton Smith.

In the 1800s, the company E. & A. Sewall was for a time the largest manager and owner of sailing tonnage in America, and builder of the largest wooden ships in the world. In 1860 Harold was born into the illustrious clan, the son of Arthur. Graduating Harvard in 1882 and 1885, he was immediately active in the Pacific, as consul in Samoa, Pago Pago, and U. S. Minister to Hawaii. As the presiding official he personally raised the Stars and Stripes over the annexed country of Hawaii – shame! oh Mainer. He finally came home and served in Maine's Senate, dying in 1924. At some point, Harold chose Sidney Lawton Smith to execute his bookplate.

Another of those Massachusetts bookplate-artist prodigies, Sidney Lawton Smith (1845-1929) was "one of the finest copper engravers of bookplates in the United States." One of the five Acknowledged Masters (what a crew!). In *American Bookplates* Butler noted each of SLS's plates "was supremely a picture or composition in miniature while retaining the harmony of pictorial arrangement with lettering that suited the purpose of a bookplate."³ And for Sewall's bookplate, Smith produced a miniature ship portrait, honoring that maritime art form in his beautiful design. *Illustration 1*



Illustration 1: Crisply printed and of excellent quality. Approx 4.25" x 2.75"

The bookplate has a ruled outer border holding a continuous line of ropework (it is briefly intersected at the bottom by “the world”). The inner border is a sandy bottom (stippled ground) from which rise on the left and right sides frothy waves, cresting into taller waves across the top. Almost an echo of heraldic mantling, it is a well-conceived frame. The center of the top wave bears an oval crest. It has a thin dot-and-lozenge surround containing a naturalistically-rendered bee. Very fine stippling shades the ground. Below the outspread wings, a motto in a trifold banner reads “VIVERE EST AGERE”. A ruled inner line, curling upward at the top of “the world” is the stage for the main event.

The body of the bookplate contains a ship under sail, bow on, the view slightly to port. She’s a beauty (the ship and the artist’s craft), a fully-rigged square rigger correct in every detail. With “a bone in her teeth” (going fast enough to create a bow wave) she seems to be outward bound, an apt symbol for a man of this transglobal family. It is my belief that the ex libris commemorates a specific vessel from the Sewall shipyards. No generic boat motif would do. Though a classic “Down-Easter”⁴ it is so minutely-detailed and carrying the tiny house flag of the Sewalls, that one must think she was specifically chosen for this bookplate. On the receding left horizon is a small two-masted lightship. The sky is finely-lined and crowded with delicate clouds. Below this seascape is a tilted globe with a trifold ribbon overlaid with the name HAROLD MARSH SEWALL. Above the word HAROLD in the innermost border is “S.L.S. 1921”

Once again, for the collector, a confluence of interests meet for my pleasure. Sidney Lawton Smith, a favorite designer, executes a bookplate for a member of a family important to Maine history. The owner had a role in a significant event for which we bear national regret, yet he left us with this fine example of an American Golden Era bookplate.

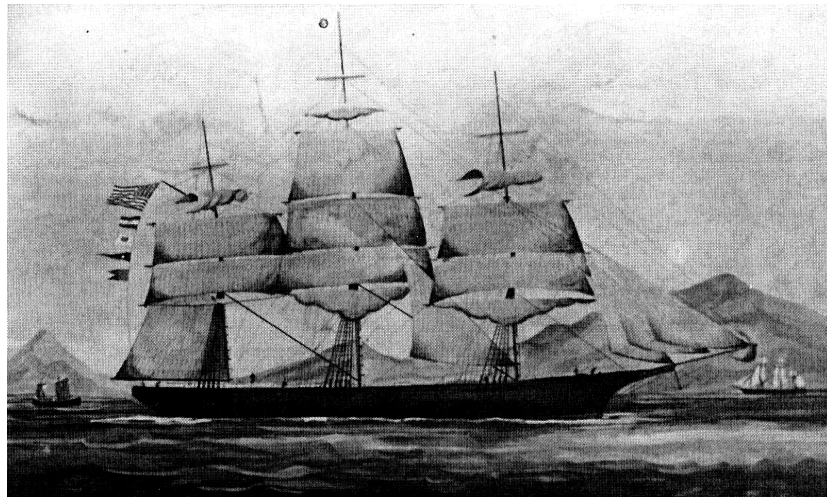


Illustration 2: A ship portrait of a Maine-built vessel in a foreign port. These were frequently commissioned by ship owners or captains.

Afterthought...

Butler mentions that in 1895 “The oldest living American collector [of bookplates] was H. F. Sewall.” Mmm? A forebear of our Harold?

Also...

This ex libris is affixed to the inside cover of L. de Hegermann Lindenchrone’s *In the Courts of Memory*, Harper, 1912. The book bears a Boston bookseller tag. The author of the memoir was actually a Bostonian, related to important New Englanders. The former Lillie Greenough of Cambridge, Massachusetts married Charles Moulton of Paris, and later became wife to a Danish minister. She was a contemporary of Harold : did they know each other from diplomatic or social connections?

¹ Charles Dexter Allen, *Ex Libris Essays of a Collector*, Lamson, Wolfe, and Company, Boston/New York, 1896, page 147

² *New England and the Sea*, Robert Albion, W. Baker, B. Labares, M. Brewington Mystic/Middleton: Marine Historical Association and Wesleyan University Press, 1972, p. 142

³ William E. Butler, *American Bookplates*, London, Primrose Hill Press, 2000, p 147

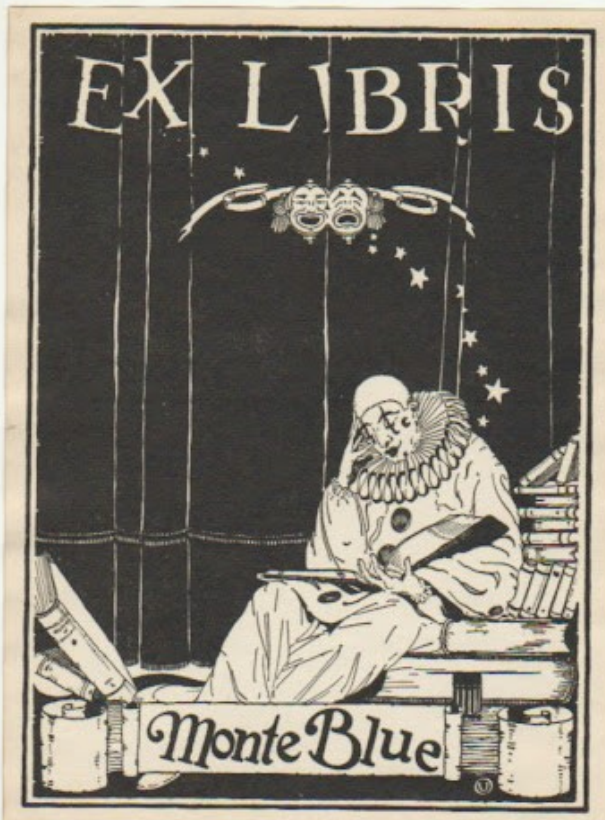
⁴ Albion op.cit. p 168. Regarding Down-Easters; “These were large ships ranging for the most part from two hundred to three hundred feet in length, of good model and excellent finish. They were the highest development of the wooden square-rigger.”

Silent Film Star Bookplates - Part Six "A"

Originally appeared in Lew Jaffe's legendary "Confessions of a Bookplate Junkie" blog on Monday, August 8th, 2011

Monte Blue (1890-1963)

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, on January 11th, 1890, Monte Blue was part Cherokee Indian. His father died when he was young, and he was raised in an orphanage. For consolation and a positive outlet in his life, Monte turned to athletics, building his body up to a lithe strength and tenacity, all of which is particularly noticeable in his silent films. Monte worked his way through Purdue University. He worked as both a lumberjack and cowboy before beginning his film career with director [D.W. Griffith](#), who gave Monte a bit part in his classic silent film, "The Birth Of A Nation" (1915). Monte appeared in over 200 movies, most of them action pictures, westerns, and dramas. He was also a screenwriter. He was married three times, to Erma Gladys, to Tova Jansen from 1924 until her death in 1956, and then to Betty Jean Munson from 1959 until his death. He worked through the 1950's, in bit parts and character parts, until his death



Ex Libris Designs by Alfons (Alphonse) Maria Mucha (1860-1939)

James P. Keenan

I recently discovered two nice ex libris examples by Alfons (Alphonse) Maria Mucha that I'd like to share. You know Mucha as the famous Czech painter, illustrator, graphic artist, and poster artist - you'll be pleased to know he was a bookplate artist too! **How many ex libris did he create? Does anyone have images and information to exchange?**



C3 - 1917 - 120x60mm



L - 1920 - 150x105mm

From WikiMedia:

Alfons (Alphonse) Maria Mucha (1860-1939) was born in Ivančice, a small provincial town in southern Moravia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and today the Czech Republic. He commenced his artistic journey as an autodidact, later pursuing vocational training in stage decorations in Vienna from 1879 to 1881. During this time, he also attended evening drawing classes. Subsequently, he furthered his studies at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts from 1885 to 1887.

Following his time in Munich, Mucha relocated to Paris, considered the "mecca" of the arts. There, he continued his studies under various teachers while sustaining himself through modest commissions for book and newspaper illustrations. He briefly shared a studio with Paul Gauguin.

In December 1894, Mucha gained prominence with a commission to design a poster for the esteemed actress Sarah Bernhardt. His poster promoting the play *Gismonda* captivated audiences in Paris, marking a significant breakthrough in his career.

Delighted with Mucha's work, Sarah Bernhardt awarded him an exclusive contract for six years. Consequently, Mucha not only created posters for her productions but also contributed to theater decorations and costumes. This partnership propelled Mucha into high demand for various commercial print advertising commissions.

By this juncture, Alphonse Mucha had forged his distinctive style, characterized by elements of Art Nouveau, delicate hues, and Byzantine decorative motifs. His artistic repertoire often featured ethereal young women with flowing tresses and elaborate attire, elements that would become synonymous with Mucha's work.

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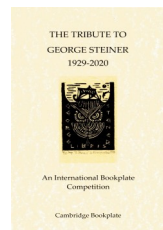
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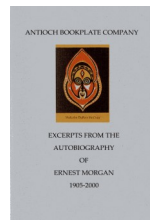
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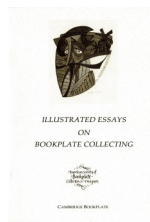
- *Ex Libris: The Art of Contemporary World Bookplates*. Cambridge Bookplate, 2022 (979-8-9860741-3-9). Description: This exhibition opened at the **American Bookbinders Museum**, San Francisco in 2022. 59 ppgs, 146 artists representing 33 countries in this juried exhibition catalogue. Includes contact information for all of the artists. For a limited time the exhibition opening invitation is also included. Archival quality papers, full color, saddle-stitched, 5.5" x 8.5". \$16.00 + \$5.00 USD for First Class postage & handling within the USA.



- *Tribute to George Steiner. An International Bookplate Competition*. Cambridge Bookplate, 2022 (979-8-9860741-1-15). Description: This exhibition opened at the **Book Club of California**, San Francisco in 2022. 58 ppgs. The top 30 artists representing 27 nations in this juried exhibition catalogue. Includes contact information for all of the artists. For a limited time the exhibition opening invitation is also included. Archival quality papers, full color, saddle-stitched, 5.5" x 8.5". \$16.00 + \$5.00 USD for First Class postage & handling within the USA.



- *Antioch Bookplate Company. Excerpts from the Autobiography of Ernest Morgan 1905-2000*. Cambridge Bookplate, 2022 (979-8-9860741-2-2). Description: This is the autobiography of the dynamic man who built the **Antioch Bookplate Company**. Many illustrations including bookplate designs by Rockwell Kent, Raymond DaBoll, and Lynd Ward. 70 ppgs. Archival quality papers, full color, saddle-stitched, 5.5" x 8.5" \$16.00 + \$5.00 USD for First Class postage & handling within the USA.



- *Illustrated Essays on Bookplate Collecting*. Revised edition. Cambridge Bookplate, 2022 (979-8-9860741-0-8). Description: This revised illustrated edition includes seven excellent essays on bookplate collecting including Armorial Ex Libris, The Press Motif, Wine Motifs, and Don Quixote. 76 ppgs. Archival quality papers, saddle-stitched. 5.5" x 8.5". \$16.00 + \$5.00 USD for First Class postage & handling within the USA.



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