

Aimée Beaubien

Unfurl, Unfold: the touch of a leaf, the page in a book felt
2021



SYNOPSIS

Through the tactile pages of *Unfurl Unfold: the touch of a leaf, the page in a book felt*, Aimée Beaubien visualizes her longstanding draw to books and vines. Mesmerized by vines and their steadfast embrace of all that they encounter, Beaubien has created an artist book in which the reading experience mimics the movements of a growing vine. Gatefolds allow the reader to expand the dimensions of the book while the turning of pages reveal inclusions that feature plant-inspired poetry and clues to the many horticulture-related books visually referenced throughout. Imagery in this book include cut-up and woven photographs of plant matter, still lifes featuring books from Beaubien's personal library, and documentation of her immersive art installations.

Through combining screenprinting and inkjet printing, the artist was liberated from the expectations of conventional photography. Beaubien dissected her compositions, at times literally peeling layers of a photograph into distinct color fields, and rebuilding new fantastical compositions and color palettes. Many textures appear visually in the photographs (architectural elements, plant matter, books, lace, embroidery, etc), and the combination of print methods heightens the sensation of touching the pages. The use of Tyvek paper, inclusions from vintage books, and a woven paracord binding further pushes the tactile playfulness of *Unfurl Unfold*.

This visceral book has been assembled for aesthetic pleasure as well as to reflect on how gardens and libraries portray time, and examine how plant life, be it immaculately tended or untamed growth, is integrated into all aspects of life.

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VISUAL REFERENCES

By visually referencing and re-envisioning important texts from a variety of artistic and academic fields, *Unfurl Unfold* offers a contemporary perspective of the intersections of photography, horticulture, and poetry.

Through integrating photographs of books from Beaubien's own personal library, the artist also draws attention to the importance of libraries as a source of inspiration and a tool to understand and interpret the world around us.

Unfurl Unfold directly and indirectly references the following texts:

- The reoccurring vine motif throughout the book is appropriated from the cover of Emily Dickinson's *Herbarium* (ca 1839-1846). This book functions as a scientific text, a work of visual art, and an archeological document.
- The multidirectional format of Dickinson's envelope poems as they appear in the book *The Gorgeous Nothings* by Emily Dickinson, Marta Werner and Jen Bervin was a source of inspiration for approaching the artist book as both a work of visual art and non-linear textual art.
- *Garden Flowers in Color: A Picture Cyclopaedia of Flowers* by G.A. Stevens, 1939 is visually referenced through manipulated photographs of the physical book. Additionally, *Unfurl Unfold* includes an original illustrated spread from this vintage garden book overprinted with a photograph taken by the artist of another seminal text, *How to Wrap Five Eggs: Traditional Japanese Packaging*. Through this, Beaubien tests different ways that books can appear as a subject within another book, mirroring the way that one book guides a reader to the next book.
- Another recurring visual motif throughout the book is a particular spread from the book "*How to Wrap Five Eggs: Traditional Japanese Packaging*" by Hideyuki Oka, 1965. The featured spread depicts a twig of magnolia opposite kumazasa bamboo leaves, and highlights the beauty, elegance, and utility of natural plant fibers in daily life and how seamlessly plant forms and their likeness are integrated into all aspects of life.
- In the 1840's, the botanical artist, collector and photographer Anna Atkins published *British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions*, the first photobook printed and illustrated with cyanotype photograms. Building on the photographic history of botanical material, Beaubien experiments with inverting images and confusing the qualities of light and shadow to explore visual analogies to photosynthesis and her role as a gardener, artist, collector, and photographer.

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CHRONOLOGICAL DATA

Start Date: 2/12/2020 **Completion date:** 1/6/2022

OBJECT INFORMATION:

Paper Size: 10" x 13" (book opens to 10" x 26")
Image Size: full bleed
Orientation: horizontal
Chop(s): none
Paper Type: Tyvek (LexJet TOUGHcoat Synthetic Banner)
Deckle? No
Inscriptions: Signature, Year, Edition # (inside left flap on protective pouch)
Various handwritten elements on artist tape throughout the book

PRINTING INFORMATION

Technique Details: Inkjet prints on Tyvek with additional screenprinted layers
Double-sided printing
Bleed prints
Ink Details: Speedball Acrylic Screen Printing ink; Canon inkjet ink
Number of layers: Variable
Printer: Angee Lennard

EDITION INFORMATION

Edition: 25 **Artist Proofs:** 1
B.A.T. 0 **Publishers Proofs:** 1
Printers Proofs: 1 **Hors de Commerce:** 1 (handling copy)

ADDITIONAL BOOK DETAILS:

- 10" x 13" artist book that open to up to 10" x 39"
- Hand-sewn French link stitch binding with paracord that grows into a woven element mimicking interlocking vine structures
- Includes 32 images combining inkjet and screenprint on Tyvek
- Comprised of six folios including two 6-page gatefold concertinas and one 8-page parallel map fold
- The book with its many inserts is housed inside of a 12" x 18" inkjet printed and sewn Tyvek enclosure

Inserts Include:

- Screenprint on a unique illustrated spread from a vintage garden book*
- Ink and artist tape on index from a vintage garden book*
- Four double-sided screenprints pressed between pages
- Patterned protective glassine interleaving
- Colophon with image descriptions flowing across a facsimile of Emily Dickinson's herbarium.

**screen print on select spreads from Garden Flowers in Color: A Picture Cyclopedic of Flowers by G.A. Stevens, 1939 ("a most unusual Garden book and one that is made possible only by an extremely happy combination of circumstances.")*