



BY ELLEN KNUDSON

Books Making Books

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS INSPIRE NEW CREATIVE WORKS IN THE BOOK ARTS

Richly colored labels brimming with tropical fruits. Elegant birds swooping and pecking. Medieval medicines and creatures of the mind. Through the Marjorie S. Coffey Library Endowment Residency, these diverse materials from the Special and Area

Studies Collections (SASC) in the George A. Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida have inspired the creation of three new artist's books. Initiated in 2015, the Coffey Residency is an opportunity for a selected artist to access materials from

the SASC as the impetus for the creation of a limited edition artist's book. During the semester-long residency, the artist

interacts with librarians, curators, faculty, and students across the university. Production of the project involves conference, consultation, and technical assistance from Ellen Knudson, Associate in Book Arts. The project is produced in collaboration with University of Florida School of Art & Art History (SA+AH), using the letterpress and book arts facilities and equipment in the SA+AH.

Marjorie Coffey was an artist and writer who created a plethora of artworks in many mediums across her lifetime, including artist's books and



Marjorie Coffey in her studio, Washington, D.C., 1977.



LEFT: Detail of Red-headed woodpecker from *The Woodpeckers of Florida*. Molly Kempson. (2016)

BELOW: Emily Martin's artist's book, *All Sorts*.

RIGHT: Samples of fruit labels from the Jerry Chicone, Jr. *Citrus Crate Label Collection*. These citrus labels were direct inspiration for some of the design elements in *All Sorts*.

miniature books. Upon her passing in 2008, the Coffey Endowment at the George A. Smathers Libraries was established in support of miniature books and artists' books. It's easy to imagine Ms. Coffey's pleasure with the outcome of her generous donation to the Libraries, and the art and craft of book making.

The inaugural artist's book edition from the Marjorie S. Coffey Library Endowment Residency and the first publication of the Library Press@

UF is *All Sorts*, by Emily Martin (Naughty Dog Press / University of Iowa). Ms.

Martin designed the structure and worked with Ms. Knudson to make plates, print, and produce the tunnel book in an edition of 35 books and slipcases.

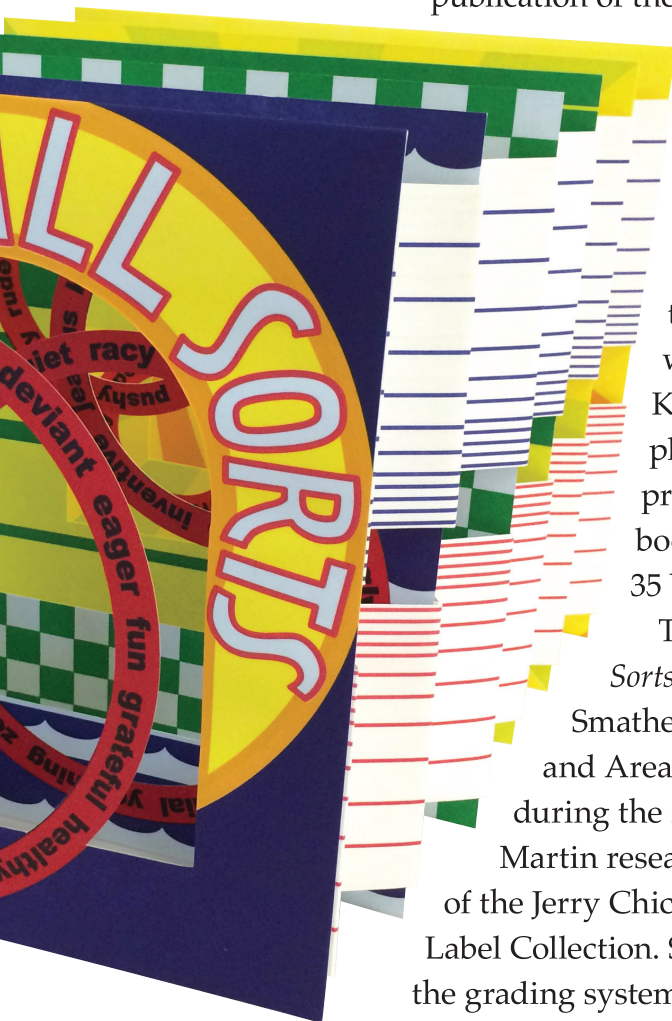
The design of *All Sorts* began in the Smathers Libraries Special and Area Studies Collections during the summer of 2015. Ms. Martin researched the contents of the Jerry Chicone, Jr. Citrus Crate Label Collection. She discovered that the grading system for citrus is



displayed through label color: blue = best quality, red = second quality, yellow = third quality. Inspired by the vibrant colors and patterns of the labels, and the structure of the wooden fruit crates, Ms. Martin designed a three-dimensional tunnel book. She used direct references from the labels as design elements in the book. The piece is 9" x 9" square, the same size as many of the fruit crate labels. The artist was intrigued by the concept of labeling, and in response created an alphabetic system of words that are used to "label" people.

These words travel in a spiral of circular forms through the depth of the tunnel book. The viewer recognizes the words as personality descriptors that are positive, negative, or neutral.

Emily Martin is a nationally renowned book artist. Her work is





in many national and international institutions (Victoria & Albert Museum, Library of Congress). Much of Ms. Martin's artist's books focus on language and human relationships using paper engineered works. Her most current work is a view of Shakespearean plays using paper dolls and paper puppets.

The 2016 edition of the Marjorie S. Coffey Library Endowment Residency at the George A. Smathers Libraries is *The Woodpeckers of Florida*. The book, featured on the cover of this issue, was designed by Molly Kempson (Spotty

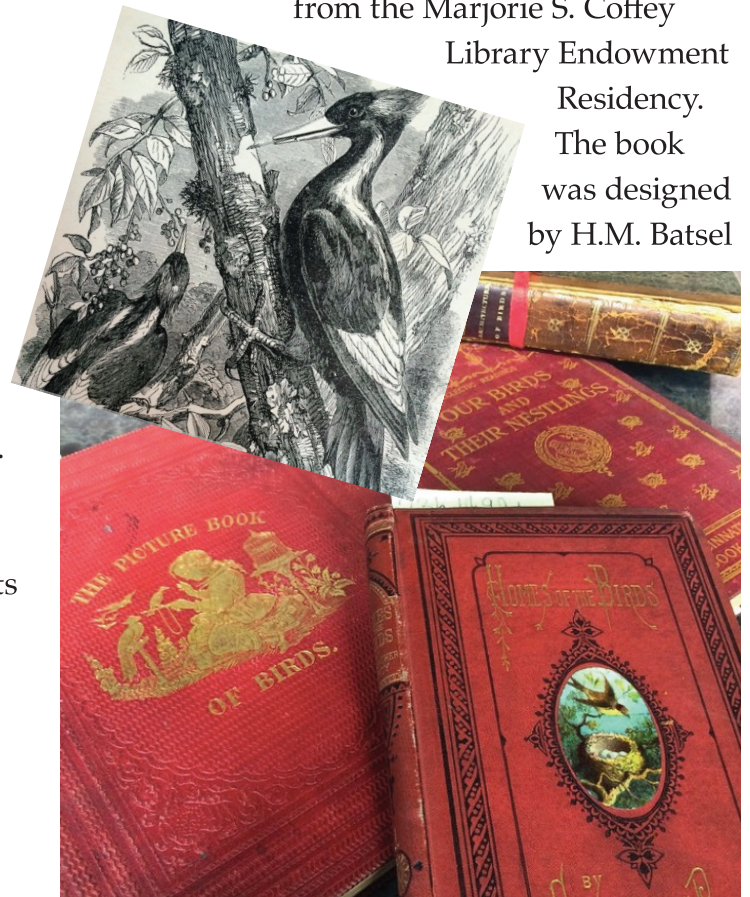
Boy Press) during the six-week summer residency. The book is inspired by Ms. Kempson's research and study of natural history texts from the Harold and Mary Jean Hanson Rare Book

ABOVE: Prints and portfolio from *The Woodpeckers of Florida*. Molly Kempson. (2016)

RIGHT: Detail of woodpecker from *The Picture Book of Birds* by J.G. Woods, from the Baldwin Childrens' Book Collection. (1875)

Collection and the Baldwin Library in the Special and Area Studies Collections Department. Ms. Kempson illustrated and printed the hand-cut linoleum blocks, and worked with Ms. Knudson to produce the portfolio in an edition of 50 sets of eight prints. Ms. Kempson's work as a professional artist and printmaker centers around the animal and plant habitats in the southern United States, so it is fitting that her project for the residency focused on specific Florida fauna. Ms. Kempson is an alumnus of the UF School of Art & Art History graduate program in Art Education. She continues producing her work as a printer in the Gainesville area, while also working as an elementary school art teacher and as a resident artist in the Arts in Medicine program at Shands Hospital.

Ephemerus is the 2017 artist's book edition from the Marjorie S. Coffey Library Endowment Residency. The book was designed by H.M. Batsel



(Chicago, Illinois) during the semester-long residency in the fall of 2017. The book is inspired by Batsel's research and study of occult and magical texts from the Harold and Mary Jean Hanson Rare Book Collection and movable books from the Baldwin Library in the Special and Area Studies Collections Department. Batsel wrote, illustrated, and printed the linoleum blocks, and engineered the movable parts for the book. Batsel and Knudson worked together to produce the edition of 40 books.

Ephemerus tells the story of a magician and his dying apprentice who

BELOW: Foldout page from *Ephemerus* that features elements from local Gainesville landmark, The Devil's Millhopper.

INSET IMAGE: Photo taken by H.M. Batsel during her visit to The Devil's Millhopper site.

the magician attempts to spare from death through his mastery of magic and spiritual negotiation. The story reveals the limitations of power and the reality of human frailty.



Batsel found fantastical storylines in the texts of her research which she incorporated into her own tale. She also integrated native Florida species and local Gainesville landmark, The Devil's Millhopper, into the visual environment of her story.

ABOVE: Spread from H.M. Batsel's artist's book, *Ephemerus*.

INSET IMAGE: Cover of the book *Bilder-Sauberei* from the Baldwin Library in the Special and Area Studies Collections.





LEFT: *The Woodpeckers of Florida*.
Molly Kempson. (2016)

Hannah Batsel is an artist living in Chicago, Illinois. Her work is not exclusively artist's books, but it is built around illustration and storytelling. Her work is housed in private collections and academic institutions.

Since its inception in 2015, the Coffey Residency has become nationally respected in the book arts community and the books produced from the residency have been well and widely acclaimed. Some of the institutions that house the Coffey publications are University of Miami, University of Illinois, University of South Carolina, University of Iowa, Washington University, and Michigan State University.

Books have the distinction of comfort and familiarity that many other art forms lack. The distinguished book artist and publisher, Walter Hamady of The Perishable Press, once said of the artist's book¹: "The book is perhaps the most personal form an artist can deal with. It encompasses a multiple and sequential picture plane, it is tactile, and to be understood it must be handled by the viewer, who then becomes a

participant. The participant is an individual, not public by display but private by means of one-person-at-a-time revelation. The book as a structure is the Trojan Horse of art — it is not feared by average people. It is a familiar form in the world, and people will take it from you and examine it whereas a painting, poem, sculpture, or print they will not."

The Coffey Residency is built on revealed stories — the story of its donor, Marjorie S. Coffey, the stories of artists and human beings. The resulting objects of visual, textual stories are created by the unique chemistry of the Special and Area Studies Collections and the artists of this residency.

BELOW: *Ephemerus*, by H.M. Batsel. (2017)



¹Quote from the article "Papermaking by Hand" by Walter Hamady. *American Book Collector*, Volume 2/Number 3/New Series July/August 1981.