

# Artist's work an open book

## Spellbinding expressions part of new exhibit at Lincoln Center

By **JIM FOSTER**  
The Coloradan

Susan Hensel's pottery carried a message.

The problem was, nobody understood it.

"The pottery was too opaque in meaning," said Hensel, a Michigan artist being featured in the Lincoln Center Walkway Gallery through mid-February. "It's non-narrative and far more abstract. The metaphors were only understandable to me."

Hensel's goal was to convey some sort of meaning through her work, but pottery wasn't getting it done. So she turned to a hobby, papermaking, and coupled it with a new skill, book binding, to create a new outlet for expression.

"Ideally, an art book is a fully integrated, multimedia art object working on all cylinders," Hensel said of her handmade art books on display. "They pull on all the participator's senses."

Along with Hensel's work, the Walkway Gallery features watercolor paintings by Beth Shadur. Other art showcased at the Lincoln Center through mid-February include acrylic paintings by Amy Guion Clay and encaustic paintings by Kristy Deetz, both in the Lobby Gallery, and wire drawings by Joel Armstrong in the Intimate Gallery.

Hensel starting making art books after spending 25 years working with clay. "Everyone needs a hobby, and mine was handmade paper," she said. "I went back to the community college to take another course in paper making. And after a couple years, the paper actually swept away the clay. I'd gone as far as I cared to go with clay."

A friend who taught Hensel to bind a book helped her change mediums, she said. At that point, the paper she was making became a three-dimensional canvas.

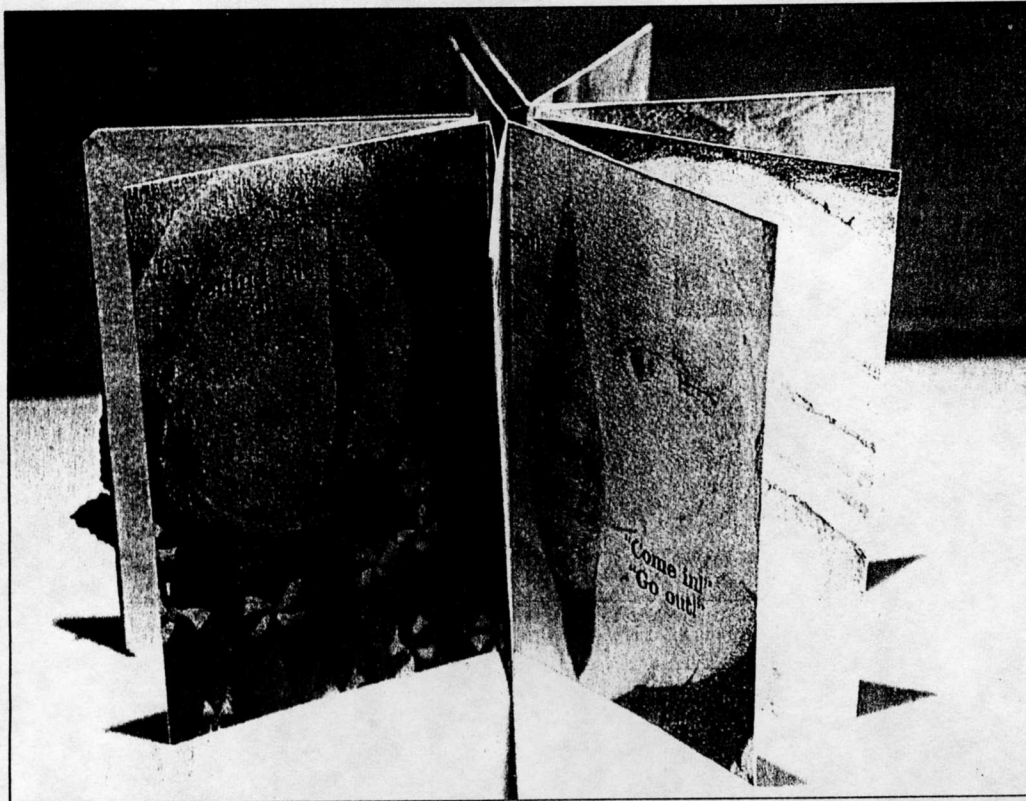
"My universe really shifted," she said. "It's the most powerful event next to childbirth that has happened in my life."

"I spend all my disposable income on books, and I've been a writer on and off. So once I learned I could bind one, my life changed."

Hensel was able to communicate her ideas about war, media frenzy, resurrection, discipleship and isolation on the pages of her handmade books.

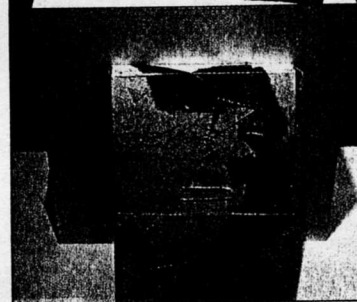
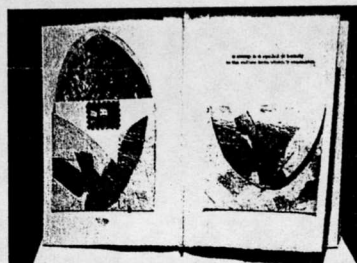
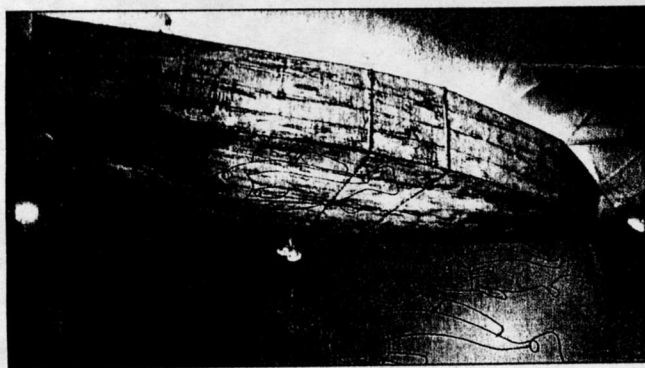
"Most artists will tell you they don't exactly care if you understand their work, but they do want you to be in the ballpark," Hensel said. "What ended up happening with the book was, I could be

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Photos by Rich Abrahamsen/The Coloradan

**FINE ART:** 'Whispers,' above, and 'Stamp Album,' below right, are among the handmade fine art books created by Susan Hensel that are on display at the Lincoln Center. Among other pieces on display, below left, is an installation by Joel Armstrong titled 'thesignofjonah.'



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### On Display

Works by Susan Hensel, Beth Shadur, Joel Armstrong, Amy Guion Clay and Kristy Deetz will be on display at the Lincoln Center, 417 W. Magnolia St., through Feb. 15. Gallery hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday. Admission is free.

A public reception for all exhibits will be held at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 28 at the Lincoln Center. Information: 221-6735.

## Art

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a storyteller. I could tell my personal stories, but tell them in a way that would have more global meaning to people."

Hensel, using various shapes of paper, creates books that feature her writing and blend a variety of media such as photographs, stamping and paint.

"You have to keep the visual aspects in mind," she said. "You have to think about how the words will look on a page, how the type will influence the meaning. You have to think about the color and shape."

Being displayed with Hensel's books in the Walkway Gallery, which runs in front of the Mini Theatre, are a collection of watercolors and pencil drawings by Shadur. Her works are narrative in nature and deal with various themes of personal concern.

"I want the images to be disturbing behind a false veneer of comfort, humor and beauty," Shadur said.

Featured in the Intimate Gallery are wire drawings by Armstrong, a Loveland artist.

"Vivid memories of gulls, wind salt air and rust were the inspirations for my wire installation," Armstrong said.

The installation consists of approximately 170 wire fish and a 12-foot boat that illuminates the room. Visitors also encounter sounds and smells associated with the work.

"The beauty of this and other installation art is that it becomes a jumping off point for your own personal memories and interpretations," Armstrong said.

The Lincoln Center's third gallery, the Lobby Gallery, features works by two artists — Clay's acrylic paintings and Deetz's paintings on carved wood.

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