



Converse Headlines

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Women and Books: Uncovered

October 2001

The Milliken Gallery at Converse College presents Women and Books: Uncovered, a national juried exhibition of artists' books. Curated by Teresa Prater, Associate Professor of Studio Art, and Nancy O'Dell-Keim, Milliken Gallery Director, the exhibition focuses on women book artists whose content explores women's issues.

The exhibit will be on display until November 20. The gallery is located next to the Milliken Art Building on Converse's campus and is open Monday - Friday. Large parties are encouraged to call in advance.

Twenty-four artists are included in the show: Gwen Diehn, Ashley Worley, Sandy Webster, Lee Marchalonis and Anne Beidler are from the Southeast. Elizabeth Buckley, Deborah Phillips Chodoff, Maureen Cummins, Holly Hanessian, Roberta Lavadour, Julie Harris, Martha Schermerhorn, Mindy Belloff, Alice Simpson, Dianne Fine, Gail Smuda, Tracy Honn, Emily Martin, Susan Rotolo, Kay Kenny, Susan Hensel, Susan Kapuscinski Gaylord, Martha Hall, and Sky Pape are from New York, Iowa, Oregon, New Jersey, Maine and New Hampshire.

Many of the artists' books in the show explore personal issues such as body image, breast cancer, child abuse, marriage, relationships and the home. Deborah Phillips Chodoff's books, for example, take a personal look at the chores of housework and the emotional overload of motherhood. Other books such as Susan Hensel's *Creation* explore a feminist view of women mythology.

Although artists' books have been in existence for more than 100 years, they have increased in popularity the past two decades. Unlike handmade books, which are often found in gift shops and craft shows, the artist book is distinguished by the content found within its pages. Like any art form, it has an aesthetic quality and can take many forms. Artists' books often take the form of a traditional codex book, which opens on the spine, and can be created using computers or letterpress. Other formats found in the exhibition include accordion, concertina, pop-ups and Japanese stab binding. One of the exciting features of artists' books is the use of nontraditional materials. Julia Harris, whose work incorporates found natural objects, uses a turtle shell as the container for the handmade pages in her book *Fertility*. Mindy Belloff, a ceramic artist, creates books that are suspended from the ceiling in the manner of a carpenter's plumb bob.

Often, artists who work with books come to it from other mediums, such as printmaking, photography, and painting. Many of the books found in the show include these mediums in their construction. Depending upon its medium, the artist book can be a one-of-a-kind or a limited edition series.

This is the second book show curated by Teresa Prater, who teaches a class on book arts and is herself a book artist. The exhibition at Converse College is being held in conjunction with her books class so students can assist in the hanging of the exhibition and have hands-on experience with artists' books. Guest artists will be brought in for workshops for the class and public during exhibition dates.

For More information, call the Milliken Art Gallery Director, Nancy O'Dell-Keim, 596 - 9181 or 864 -948 - 0161.