

**A COMPLETE GUIDE TO DESIGNING  
AND CRAFTING HAND-BOUND BOOKS**

**THE CENTER FOR BOOK ARTS**

# Bookforms



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## ANA CORDEIRO



Ana Cordeiro is a professional bookbinder in New York who works on collaborative and commissioned books. Her practice focuses on binding techniques that are sculptural because her goal as a binder is to find innovative ways to engage with the reader. She wants to shut down the autopilot response we have when handling a book—to stop “flipping without focus.”

Cordeiro was not always a binder. Her practice began in photography. But her interest in finding ways to connect the narrative threads of her photos into more cohesive statements led her to binding. She started at The Center for Book Arts learning as work-study, then interned at the Women’s Studio Workshop, and then returned to The Center for Book Arts as a Stein Scholar. She has been dedicated to book binding for almost two decades now.

She often begins projects considering the final form before considering the content—an artistic leap where ideas are often inspired by form. This process can be seen in her book *Lightweight*, which looks at how light-weight books from the Renaissance have fared better than the books bound in gold with precious stones. The book is sculpted with ridges that embody an angled beam of light and its contents run across and around its shape making humorous observations.

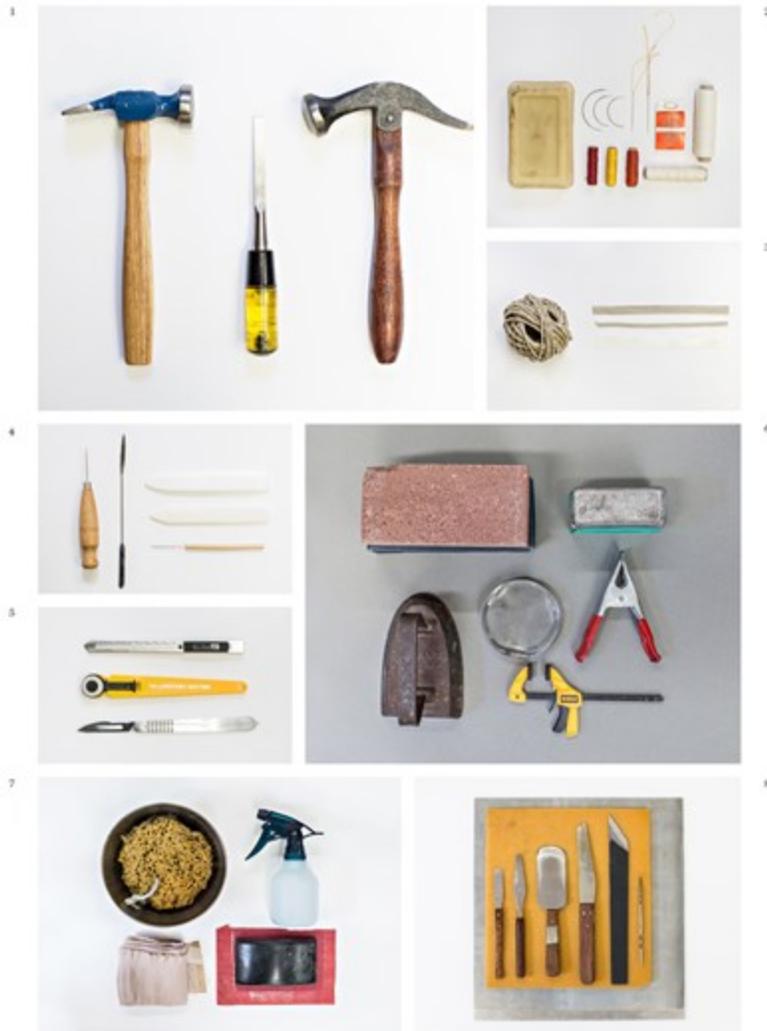
“*Lightweight* is a light hearted attempt to do justice to the genius of the Limp Vellum structure,” says Cordeiro. “May its message be its medium, may its artistry embrace eternity.”

# TOOLS, MATERIALS & STUDIO BASICS

- 1 Rounding hammers and chisel.** The rounding hammers with dome-shaped head and a claw end without a notch are rounded smooth and used to round the spine of a text block. Chisels are used for punching through heavier materials and for creating slits in boards for materials such as ribbon.
- 2 Darner and curved needles, beeswax, waxed linen, and linen thread.** Needles commonly used for sewing the text block together. Darners make good universal sewing needles and curved ones are often used in Coptic binding. Linen thread is strong and archival and comes in many colors. Beeswax helps to hold threads in place as you sew.
- 3 Linen bookbinding cord and linen tapes** Heavyweight linen cords are used to create raised bands on spines when leather is applied and worked over the top. Linen tapes are used for used for sewing on tapes in bookbinding.
- 4 Awl, bone folder, Teflon folder needle tool, and micro spatula.** Awls and needle tools are used for punching sewing stations. Awls make larger holes and the needle tool makes smaller ones. A bone folder is the most used tool for folding, scoring, and tearing paper. Its counterpart, the Teflon folder, can be used in place of the bone folder for the same things, but does not mark up the surface of book cloth, paper, or board. A micro spatula is useful

for separating pages, pressing flaking glue, and applying adhesive in hard-to-reach areas.

- 5 Snap blade, rotary blade, and scalpel.** A snap blade makes a great universal cutting tool for paper and board. A rotary tool can make quick work of cutting through several layers of papers or cloth. The scalpel blade is ideal for delicate, precision cuts.
- 6 Weights.** Anything can be a weight as long as the surface is clean when it is applied to your project. Bricks, irons, and old bits of metal work well when wrapped.
- 7 Sanding block, spray bottle, wrap bandage, natural sponge, and bowl.** Sanding blocks and paper can help refine, soften, or round the edges of boards of paper where knives will not work. A simple spray bottle with water is useful for every project in the studio. Wrap bandages are used to help hold a book tightly so it does not move when weights are not advisable.
- 8 Paring knife, paper burnisher, paper knife, palette knife, and tin sheet.** A paring knife is used for paring leather down to a thickness that will work for binding. The paper burnisher is used for marking material for folds or layout. A paper knife is used to open signatures or cut through paper.



## Bookforms

A complete guide to designing and crafting hand-bound books, from the Center for Book Arts

**Compiled by Center for Book Arts**

**Contribution by Ana Cordeiro**

**Contribution by Celine Lombardi**

**Contribution by Sarah Smith**

**Contribution by Elizabeth Sheehan**

### SALES HANDLE

Expert advice for crafting Asian and Western styles of hand-bound books by the educators at the Center for Book Arts.

### DESCRIPTION (UK)

**Brought to you by the instructors at the Center for Book Arts, *Bookforms* is a comprehensive guide for making books by hand with a focus on functionality in design.** Written by the experts at the Center for Book Arts in New York, *Bookforms* presents all the instruction you need to **craft by hand a comprehensive array of historic bookbinding styles** from all over the world. *Bookforms* traces the functional roots of each structure, explains their appropriateness for various uses, and provides projects for making an essential structure for each style of binding. Topics covered include:

- Why books work: General bookbinding principles for functionality and what we can learn from the past
- What you need to know for planning a special book or embarking on an edition
- How materials affect function

*Bookforms* tackles a wide range of projects for all levels of bookbinders. You'll see everything from **sewn and ticketed blank books** and **traditional western codex** book forms, to scrapbooks and albums, **Asian stab-sewn bindings, unusual structures**, and **aesthetics/embellishments**. What better time to dive into this venerable and unique hobby than now?

### KEY SELLING POINT

Includes all the major hand-binding styles—Asian and Western.

Clear, illustrated step-by-step directions for each project.

Explains the role of design in each type of book's function, which leads to success in completing a binding project.

### CATALOGUE BODY COPY

Written by the experts at the Center for Book Arts, *Bookforms* explores the art of hand bookbinding, discussing the hows and whys of functionality in design, aesthetics, and what you need to think about as you begin to plan a special book or edition. This comprehensive guide traces the functional roots of each structure, explains their appropriateness for various uses, and provides projects for making an essential structure for each style of binding. Readers will enjoy step-by-step instruction on several projects, including Western and Asian binding styles for blank books, as well as albums and scrapbooks.



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### BIC Category:

AKH - Book design

WFT - Book & paper crafts

WF - Handicrafts, decorative arts & crafts