

CBAA

at the 6th Biennial Codex Book Fair and Symposium

MEMBER EXPERIENCE

by Keri M. Schroeder



Above: The CBAA table at CODEX and view of fellow exhibitors

The Codex Book Fair and Symposium took place February 5-8, 2017, at the Craneway Pavilion in Richmond, California. The Codex Foundation was founded in 2005 by fine press printer Peter Koch, and paper conservator Susan Filter, in order to create an environment for promoting the book as a work of art. The Codex Book Fair and Symposium was initiated in 2007 with over 100 exhibitors and roughly 700 visitors. Since then, Codex has been ranked as one of the top book fairs in the world. Thousands of visitors attend the public book fair, and tickets sell out every year to the Symposium, which features presentations from top book artists and professionals.

Codex 2017 was special for numerous reasons. Despite crummy weather, over 200 artists and vendors from 23 different countries participated and welcomed over 4,000 visitors, making it the largest Codex event yet! Over 300 people attended The Symposium held at the Anna Head Alumnae Hall in Berkeley. This year's speakers focused on Chinese contemporary book arts, and included presentations by renowned artists and scholars in the field. But arguably, perhaps most important of all...

...[dramatic pause]...

This year, CBAA unveiled a fabulous members' showcase at our very own booth!

Visitors were lured in by our beautiful display of over 30 different books by CBAA members including students, faculty, and independent work which varied from letterpress printed tomes to sculptural altered books to digitally printed zines. We sold mystery bags full of mysterious book arts related objects (or is it?). People were wowed by the logo-emblazoned aprons, providing much sought-after CBAA fashion and function. Passerbys were intrigued by the *Folium* print portfolio. And of course, the "MY OTHER CAR IS A VANDERCOOK" bumper stickers were perhaps the biggest hit of all.

We talked to visitors about CBAA and membership perks, and distributed information about next year's conference in Philadelphia. To accompany the impressive Members' Showcase was a perfectly organized and supremely helpful exhibition catalog and members directory designed by Camden Richards, who (like many of our talented CBAA members) had their own exhibitor booths at the fair where they wore their PROUD CBAA MEMBER buttons for all to see.

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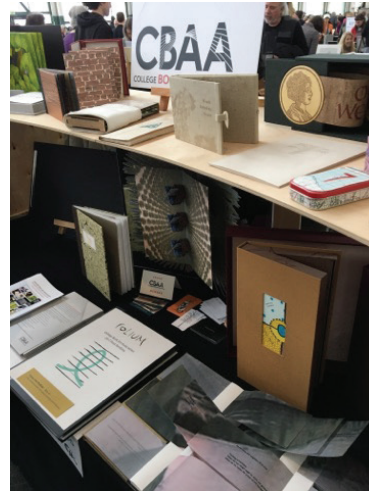
MEMBER EXPERIENCE

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During the book fair, the CBAA booth was organized and run by a small team of member volunteers. It was wonderful to meet everyone, many of whom I had only communicated with via email before. I got to hang out with Eli Boyne and Ariel Hansen Strong on the first day and see their beautiful, carefully crafted books. On Monday and Tuesday, Lyall Harris brought in a basket of ephemera treasures and Nora McKinnon displayed their impeccably printed pop-up folio. The last day I was introduced to Sarah Smith and her hilarious and intricate drawings.

Between meeting new people and seeing so much unbelievable talent under one roof, the four days went by in a flash. It's hard to not feel a bit overwhelmed at Codex – there is so much to do and see and so many people you would love to talk to for hours. This is one of the many reasons why I think it was so important for CBAA to have a presence at the fair. Though inspiring, seeing all the masterful work at Codex can be quite intimidating, especially for up-and-comers and students. CBAA reached quite a few potential members because we provide a welcoming community for students and a bountiful resource for furthering book arts education for both students and educators alike.

Keri Miki-Lani Schroeder is a book artist, writer and illustrator based out of Oakland, California. She has been a proud CBAA member since 2013, and received her MFA in Book Art and Creative Writing from Mills College in 2016. Keri works as a studio assistant at Flying Fish Press in Berkeley alongside producing her own work under the imprint Coyote Bones Press. She also hosts a podcast called Books in the Wild that focuses on book arts and book history. kerischroeder.com and booksinthewild.com



Above: close-ups of the CBAA table and visitors

Because the CBAA Membership Showcase consisted of such a wide range of work, many young people and students inquired about the organization. Having student and new graduates' work alongside professionals really helps to pique interest because 1) one can see a progression and divergence of craft and content 2) dispels some of the myths of the "master artist" 3) shows that CBAA values and encourages students and young artists.

The CBAA booth provided outreach and established relationships with our peers, and was just plain fun. I'm looking forward to Codex 2019, but I am satisfied that this year's event provided such a rush of lasting inspiration and boost of encouragement sure to tide me over until then.