

Carol Barton (b. 1954)

“I try to find ways to push a book’s pages beyond their flat surfaces and to integrate a message into the book’s form, weaving visual and verbal narrative into the magic of a third dimension.” –CAROL BARTON, 2006

Carol Barton studied painting at Washington University School of Fine Arts in St. Louis, Missouri, and later moved to Washington, D.C., to work at Glen Echo Park Arts Center. There, after learning pre-press skills to start printing her own work, she received a small grant to create her first edition of artists’ books. She later became interested in adding pop-ups to her books and spent two years studying early sculptural and movable books in area library collections, such as the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution.

For Barton, artists’ books provide a flexible structure in which to combine various media, such as sculpture, painting, and printmaking, with her interests in text, imagery, and sequencing. The exploration of visual narratives and expression of time across the page of the book are key elements of her work.

Most of Barton’s work, one-of-a-kind books and small editions, incorporates movable elements. She says that her father’s career as a diesel mechanic probably inspired her interest in the mechanical and structural qualities intrinsic to movable books and pop-ups. Her introduction to an antique Italian carousel book, a layered book form that can be pulled into a circle for display or can be read like a traditional codex book, was another influence. She works with a variety of book structures, including tunnel books and accordion books, often incorporating pop-ups within the structures. Her book *Five Luminous Towers: A Book to be Read in the Dark* (2001), contains pop-up towers that glow when the pages open, lit from within by a battery-powered bulb hidden in the book’s spine.

Barton currently runs Popular Kinetics Press, serves on the faculty at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and teaches bookbinding workshops at art centers across the United States. She received the Bogliasco Fellowship for a residency in Italy in 2000, and in 2001 was awarded a residency by the Sacatar Foundation in Brazil.

Selected Bibliography

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www.popularkineticspress.com.