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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
**Press Release**

April 19, 2006

## Playful Books on View Now Through June 30 at the Main Library

### Book Artist Karen Hanmer Emphasizes

### “Personal Connections” Through Exhibit & Workshops

- Gallery Walk & Discussion with Karen Hanmer – Saturday, May 20 at 11:00 a.m.
- Workshop – Saturday, May 20 at 2:00 p.m. (Children’s Learning Center)
- Related Exhibit – Cincinnati Book Arts Society Bookworks – May 5 - June 19 (Main Library Atrium) & CBAS Workshop – Sunday, May 21

Karen Hanmer’s intimate, playful artworks present vignettes from personal and cultural memory that allow viewers to connect personally to her pieces. She often incorporates archival photographs and text into books that fragment and layer images to mirror the experience of memory. Her books often evoke the experience of looking through an album, a diary, or the belongings of a loved one. However, many also have a playful presentation—taking the form of puzzles, games, or decks of cards, and many include tongue-in-cheek text.

The exhibit, on display in the Art & Music Department at the Main Library from now through June 30, features works from several series she’s created. Her *Farm Series* connects the viewer to the rural Midwestern landscape. Another series of work links the creative process of the artist with that of the inventor, explorer or engineer through first person accounts and archival photographs and artifacts. Other work comes straight from popular culture.

**About the Artist** - Book Artist Karen Hanmer exhibits widely, and her work is included in collections ranging from Tate Britain and the Denver Public Library to Virginia Commonwealth University and Graceland. Recent and upcoming solo exhibition venues include The Center for Book Arts (NYC), Bright Hill Center Word and Image Gallery (NY), Illinois Wesleyan University, and University of the West of England, Bristol. Recent group exhibition venues include Art Centre Silkeborg Bad in Denmark, the Wichita Art Museum, Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts, and traveling exhibitions sponsored by the Guild of Bookworkers, the Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists' Guild, and Ireland’s Wexford Arts Centre.



- more -

Hanmer holds a degree in Economics from Northwestern University. She has studied at the Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts and with several Chicago photographers and bookbinders. She serves on the editorial board of *The Bonefolder*, a peer-reviewed online book arts journal. She is an officer of Chicago Hand Bookbinders and Guild of Book Workers, Midwest Chapter. She lectures and teaches workshops on book arts and digital printing. A complete catalog of her work is available online at [www.karenhanmer.com](http://www.karenhanmer.com).

**Artist's Description of Her Work** - My sculptural books and installations fragment and layer content to mirror the experience of personal and cultural memory. The work often has a playful presentation, taking the form of puzzles, games, or decks of cards. It is made to be handled. The intimate scale and the gestures of exploration required to travel through a piece evoke the experience of looking through an album, a diary, or the belongings of a loved one.

The *Farm* series connects the viewer to the rural Midwestern landscape. It can also evoke a more personal connection to the land, along with memories of grandparents, great grandparents and the farming tradition. This work chronicles both the milestones and the daily routine in the 90-year history of an immigrant farming family. Each piece requires a heightened level of engagement – leafing through a book whose pages are interleaved like grains on a stalk of wheat; winding forward and back through a movie-like, time traveling scroll; walking through rows of an installation that becomes a walk around the boundaries of one's farm to evaluate the progress of their crops.

Another series of work links the creative process of the artist with that of the inventor, explorer or engineer through first person accounts and archival photographs and artifacts. As I researched and developed a series of artists' books on the history of aviation, I felt a kinship with the Wright Brothers, them in their bicycle shop's back room and me in my spare bedroom studio, carefully and methodically experimenting, and creating and refining prototypes. *The Beautiful Software Project* documents interviews with software engineers regarding what they find beautiful or compelling about well-written software and the act of programming.

Other work comes straight from popular culture. The rebound paperback romance novels of *Love in the Afternoon* are displayed on a low curved table with red reading chair. These mass-produced, disposable dreams of love everlasting are recast as elaborate, precious objects, like the loves described within, matching the drama of the romance with the drama of the presentation. **- more -**

## Works by Karen Hanmer



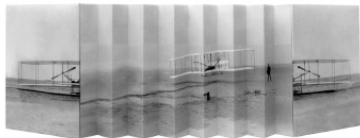
### **They All Laughed**

Pigment inkjet prints

Open size 7x5x26", Closed size 7x5x3/4"

Edition of 20

Photographs and archival documents pertaining to the Wright Brothers' first manned, powered flight, contrasted with the Gershwin song, They All Laughed, that lists a number of screwball ideas for inventions that became the foundation of modern society. Completed 2002



### **Treasures**

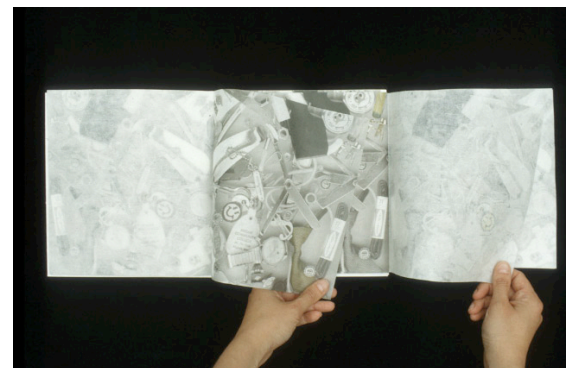
Pigment inkjet prints on Japanese paper, sewn at right and left edges.

Open size 9x17x1/2"

Edition of 20

Through the choice of binding and materials, viewer's motion through this book simulates the experience of rummaging through the items in a loved one's drawer of ephemera.

Completed 2000



### **John James Audubon: The Making of An American**

by Richard Rhodes, Alfred A. Knopf, 2004

bound by artist in 2005

Trade edition guarded and sewn on tapes, split board library binding, covered in brown goatskin, rolled leather endbands, Jenday Conure feather.

Endsheets of marbled paper followed by facsimile folios from Audubon's journals. Acrylic sprinkled edges.

9 1/4x6 1/2x2 3/4"

Structure resembles the journal Audubon took on his first formal collecting trip in 1820. Blind tooling represents the gridded, nail studded, board Audubon used to position his specimens prior to drawing.

Watch for more details, times and locations by logging onto [www.CincinnatiLibrary.org](http://www.CincinnatiLibrary.org) and then clicking on "What's New."