

INTRODUCTION

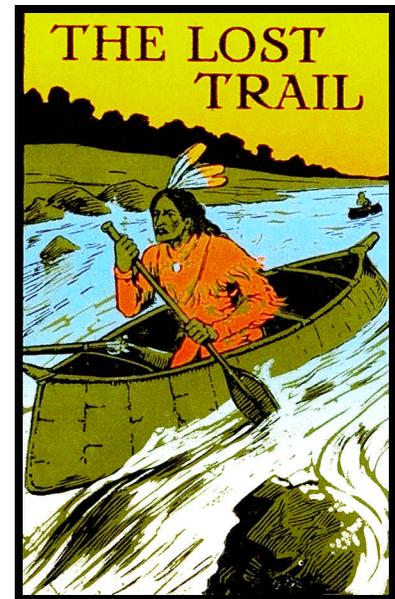
THIS book will assist the reader who wishes to construct a book utilizing contemporary digital technology. Although it is primarily aimed at photographers it will also be of use to artists, authors, historians, and others who have a collection of related material and would like to see it integrated into a single document. The emphasis is on expressive and creative work. However, the principles and procedures described throughout the book are equally applicable to introspective and arcane publications or to the production of brochures and booklets for more prosaic needs.

The primary means of assembling the book will be through the practical application of two pieces of software, Adobe Photoshop™ and QuarkXPress.™ No prior knowledge of either computer program is assumed nor does it exclude those who may be fluent in either or both. As the primary aim of this publication is to produce a book, the direct expression of an abstract idea in tangible form will always remain more important than mere technical skills. However, elementary computer competency will be assumed. You should be able to start your computer, open a program and save the results. This is sufficient to be able to follow the instructions.

The most important aspect of bookmaking is having something to say. The first thing required is having a reasonably clear idea right from the start of what the finished product will be. This is a theme that we will return to again and again during the course of this book.

To have this clear idea makes the process easier for a variety of reasons. If you are new to the programs discussed in this book, you will find it quite easy to acquire the skills necessary because they are not presented as tasks in their own right but are instead logical steps that facilitate getting the job accomplished. To learn a computer program without a goal is one of the more difficult tasks that one can attempt. Modern software programs are very complex, so much so, that one writer was prompted to make the following observation:

The stuff we call software is not like anything that human society is used to thinking about. Software is something like a machine, and something like mathematics, and something like language, and



As the title suggests, much has been forgotten about the venerable art of bookmaking. The computer, although opening up new possibilities, cannot substitute for an understanding of these rich traditions. Progress is best when it builds upon these “lost trails” rather than simply supplanting them. It is essential to research the history of bookmaking to be aware of the richness and beauty of the medium. E. S. Ellis, *The Lost Trail*, Cassell & Co., London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, no date. (Inscription inside dated 1927.)

something like thought, and art, and information ... but software is not in fact any of those other things. The protean quality of software is one of the great sources of its fascination. It also makes software very powerful, very subtle, very unpredictable, and very risky.¹

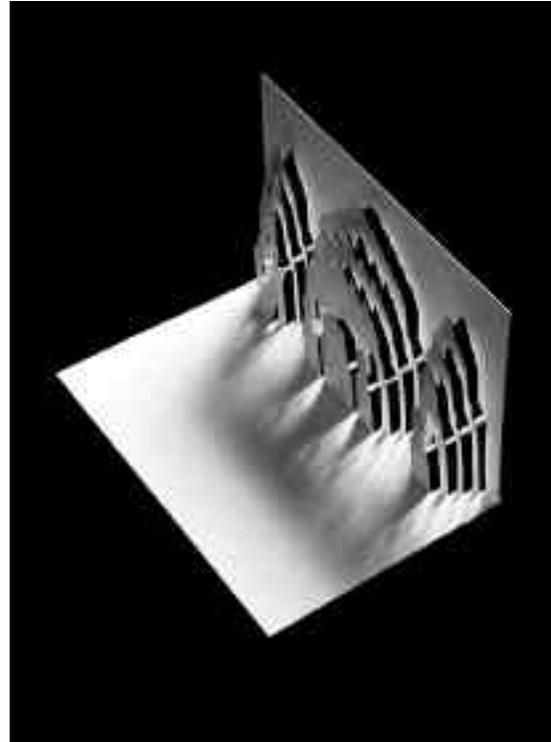
This remark was made in a different context but it graphically illustrates the complex, almost intangible nature of software. It is not within the scope of this book to either understand the nature of software, or to gain competence in every subtle intricacy and function of the programs involved. Instead the approach will be to remain focussed on the production of a tangible object and employ the software to this end, rather than learning the program for its own sake. In this way we create a path through a complex and convoluted web of possibilities, so many possibilities, in fact, that choice can become a burden rather than an opportunity. The making of a book will be our Ariadne's thread as we steer a course through this complex but tantalizing maze.

However, learning and applying these computer programs is but one part of the process. To make a book one adopts a series of roles, that in the not too distant past, were whole fields of specialized study. Consider for a moment the steps involved and the level of skill required at each stage.

When one makes images for the book, one is a photographer. When one writes the words that accompany the images, one is an author. When one places these words into an appropriate format, making decisions about type styles and typefaces, one is a typographer. When one commences to assemble all this material into a coherent package, one is both editor and graphic designer. One then proceeds in turn to be the equivalent of a reprographic camera operator, a platemaker, a printer, a bookbinder, a publisher and ultimately a book distributor or bookseller.

This is a tall order. The fact that we can even do it at all, for the most part as a function of digital technology, is remarkable in itself. It is a sobering thought to realize how the very nature of what used to be such specific, individualized and highly skilled trades and crafts, is now within the reach of many of us. Part of the process of constructing a book as described here, is to gain an appreciation of the history of bookmaking and to understand that many different skills are involved. For example, Garamond and Baskerville are not just fonts, but are the names of real people. With pen and ink they drew these typefaces, a slightly different style for each type size, on real pieces of paper, to be

1. Bruce Sterling, *The Hacker Crackdown*, Bantam Books, N.Y., 1992. p. 34.



Appreciating the qualities of your materials is an essential aspect of bookmaking. Although this is a Christmas card made by a dear friend and not a book as such, the principle of utilizing the nature of paper by exploring its qualities of transparency and its ability to create a three dimensional construction is made clear in this illustration. Christmas card made by Dr. Peter Stanbury.

cast in lead in foundries big and small, and assembled by typographers and compositors for hundreds of years.

Now we select fonts from a list on our computer screen and within an instant our document changes character and emphasis. This simple action should be treated as a responsibility, one that demands an appreciation of the hundreds of years of human history and effort that lies behind the simple phrase, “desktop publishing.” It is quite astonishing that this range of activities, from the conception of the work, to a finished bound volume, can be performed at one’s desk.

These remarks are included both as a caution to the beginner and as a homage to those who in the past kept the tradition of the book alive as it grew and evolved to the point where it is today. As you sit at your desk and work through this volume, think of the medieval monks patiently illuminating their manuscripts, the Chinese calligraphers writing their scrolls, the Victorian typesetters composing a page one lead character at a time, and all the other figures in the history of bookmaking, a medium whose fundamental purpose is to ensure that knowledge will persist through time.



The author’s first “word processor.” It was given to me by my parents when I was young. As such I am reluctant to disclose the date. However, this *Mettoy Elegant* tinplate, toy typewriter was made during the 1950s in Great Britain.