



MINIATURE BOOK SOCIETY

# MBS Distinguished Book Awards 2020



*Winners react to their awards (clockwise from top):*

**Herbert Hüpfel**

**Ishi Masako**

**Camille Riner**



## From the President

Greetings:

Well, our virtual Conclave is over. We have sent out the usual Glasgow Cup, the Anderson-Yarnell Award and Norman W. Forgue Award (thanks to Awards Committee members Jan Becker and Carol Anne Kouyoumdjian) and the Distinguished Book Awards (thanks to Rob Fleck).

Meanwhile, the virtual Book Fair also went well for the first time, and at short notice (thanks to Ron Wood). Plans are now afoot to extend the virtual Book Fair to the MBS Facebook page (thanks again to Ron Wood and Todd Sommerfeld) - in fact, by the time you read this it may already be working.

Our search for a new Newsletter editor is over: Todd Sommerfeld and Cathie

Abney have stepped forward and will take over in 2021.

And regarding other "Help Wanted," news, we would like to find someone to take over the Miniature Book Competition next year. Unfortunately, the pandemic and associated economic problems will make it impossible for Rob Fleck and the good people at Oak Knoll Press to do it again. It's actually great fun: you get to handle all those beautiful books that are entered, while the rest of us only get to see them in a display case! Contact me if you would like to find out more about this interesting post.

Stay well!

Regards,

- Tony

Tony Firman  
MBS President  
828-279-0737



## A Miniature *Memento Mori* for Edward Gorey

Patrice Miller

Edward Gorey cut his book design teeth at the Anchor division of Doubleday. His predominant output was typographic, but he stood in the amazing company of Leonard Baskin, George Giusti, Milton Glaser, and even Andy Warhol, who were generating covers for the new-flown paperback imprint. The editions, less expensive than available hardcovers, put classics and scholarly works within reach to those pursuing higher education after World War II. Jason Epstein and his team re-invented the softcover book in a satisfying and compelling way. With its quality design and modern, eye-catching covers, Anchor Doubleday elevated the paperback book out of the perceived pulp muck, and Edward Gorey's work contributed significantly to that success.



Gorey's drawing and lettering for the Anchor covers were created at the same size as the finished work, giving him the "feel" of the finished product. Perhaps that's why Gorey continued, while illustrating his own writings to produce in a small format, usually to the exact scale the work would be published. Considering most of these illustrations would easily fit in a 5" square, it seems inevitable that Gorey would explore even smaller formats. With Anne and David Bromer as publishers, Gorey saw **The Eclectic Abecedarium** and **Q.R.V.** come to fruition.

Released respectively in 1983 and 1989, both were printed by Darrell Hyder and bound by Barbara Blumenthal. Each was released in a trade edition and a deluxe edition that featured hand coloring by Gorey himself. (Please seek out the Bromers' beautiful 2015 MBS Distinguished Book Award winner, **XI LVIVMOS: Memoirs of a Bibliomidget**, for the details concerning the production of these two Gorey wonders.)

Thirty years later, there are two new Gorey miniatures, published by my Aredian Press. I have long been fascinated by book design and by Gorey; they came together for me in 2018 when I secured a contract to publish two Gorey works, and in miniature. Both would be first editions.

Looking back now, I must confess I did not grasp the complexity of the designs I envisioned. For a fledgling bookbinder, both would prove to be challenging. Had I been more pragmatic, I might not have been sufficiently brave.

The **Mourning Fan** had only been published in a 1990 edition of the literature review *Antaeus*.

Its thirty stanzas appeared on four pages, with a tiny fan illustration accompanying each in the margins. To do justice to this work, a book version had to be fan-shaped and it had to be small.

I sought out local letterpress printers, and no one was interested in printing a miniature book, much less a curved miniature. Finding just the right balance of text layout and illustration size was a significant hurdle too; my husband, the indefatigable Chris Miller guided that process.



Concurrently I explored the physical construction, as paper choice would be a significant factor—heavy enough to withstand the letterpress process, yet thin enough to be folded and sewn and allow the book to retain its shape. There were many trials of paper, thread, and sewing technique.

Friedrich Kerksieck of Small Fires Press in New Orleans had the vision and the skill to print the text beautifully; his sheets were exactly what I had in mind. With the construction details worked out, I searched for fan-shaped lace medallions to appliqué onto velvet-covered boards.

The **Mourning Fan** would be the most complex and significant project I had taken on as a publisher and bookbinder; the largest edition I had attempted to date was twenty copies. The **Mourning Fan** would be twenty-six copies (lettered A to Z) and three out-of-series copies (for the Edward Gorey Charitable Trust archives, the

MBS competition, and my collection.)

The overall concept serves as a *memento mori* to Gorey, using materials traditional to such Victorian era mourning objects: velvet, lace, beads, ivory.



Each book of the edition is uniquely beaded, with variations in sequin size, shape, and color (black, grey, pearlescent, and aurora borealis) and bead types (seed pearls, bugle beads, and other rounds). To emphasize the book's fan identity, I incorporated a tassel into the binding design. The enclosure, rather than a traditional clamshell, features a tilted cradle, presenting the book in the manner of a treasured



piece of jewelry. To increase the mystery and reflect light, the box is lined with black moire book cloth, black sequined lace, and duchess silk. A woolly mammoth ivory medallion engraved with the book's initials "TMF" completes the box's interior. The exterior of the enclosure's trays is covered in lokta hand-printed by Dallas' Terri Thoman chosen from her collection of vintage Indian wood blocks. The outside of the box is black goat skin and features a title I designed to evoke 19th-century book covers.

Ultimately the book production was a national effort: polymer plate fabrication in New York, printing in Louisiana, die cutting in Mississippi, and title die cutting in California.

Leather was ordered from Michigan, woolly mammoth ivory from Massachusetts, and lace and beads from many more locations.

From concept to fabrication, the project—including modeling, finalizing the design, sourcing and securing

materials, printing, die cutting, and actual construction—took eight months. I completed three copies of the edition in time to submit an entry for the 2019 MBS competition and was elated to receive a Distinguished Book Award. The edition is two-thirds completed, and I have continued working on the edition while undertaking the design and binding of my second Gorey miniature first edition: **The Worst Monster**.

A footnote to this **Mourning Fan** history is the discovery of Anne Bromer's February 1990 correspondence with the fearless California book artist, Joe D'Ambrosio, about the possible production of a third Gorey miniature—in fan shape. His May response to Anne acknowledges his reluctance, given what the book "cries out" to be, versus the constraints of the desired price point and edition size: *"I have to learn not to lose money on those projects which intrigue me."*

My **Mourning Fan** pursuit has been frustrating, challenging, rewarding, and certainly – as D’Ambrosio anticipated – intriguing.



*Editor's note: We are very proud to note that **The Mourning Fan** can now be found at the Library of Congress, and within university collections and private collections in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan. The edition is not yet sold out; you may contact Patrice at [p.miller.aredian@sbcglobal.net](mailto:p.miller.aredian@sbcglobal.net).*



***...We welcome your interesting stories about miniature books and their place in your world... and your library.***

Contact the editor any time with a story you want to see... or one you've written but never got around to sending.

## **Photo Credits**

**"Edward Gorey"**

Courtesy of Patrice Miller

**Cover/Distinguished Book Awards**

Photos provided by award winners

**"Cobbler's Children 2.0"**

Courtesy of Deborah Evarts

## Distinguished Book Awards 2020

Regardless of COVID19 having a great effect on our lives, I am very pleased to present the official **Miniature Book Society Competition Catalog of 2020**. While the number of entries was lower than usual, the creativity and thoughtfulness in these works of art that fit in the palm of your hand has not been affected by the pandemic.

***Umbrella***, written, illustrated, and published by Ishi Masako, Mathi Page.

***Wo? / Where?***, by Herbert Hüpfel and illustrated with hand marbled paper by Hasan Akten.

***Saint Lucia***, authored and illustrated by Camille Riner with her own photographs.

*Editor's Note: By now you will have received your copy of the 2020 **Miniature Book Competition and Exhibition Catalog**. Did you know that past issues dating to 2001 are available on the MBS website? Check out the new resources being added all the time.*

[www.mbs.org](http://www.mbs.org)

AN INTERNATIONAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FOUNDED IN 1983

***"Our Purpose Is To Sustain Interest In All Aspects Of Miniature Books"***

### ***Member Handbook Update/Apology***

The third quarter update was sent at the end of August and the editor extends an apology for an error of note: Cathie Abney is no longer the contact for newsletter advertising (that should be Donna Knoell and Kim Herrick) or the Live Auction Catalog. Contact Donna LaVallee with other errors/omissions.



## The Cobbler's Children 2.0

Deborah Evarts

In this follow-up, Deborah shares a few tips for obtaining professional results on your repairs.

### Quality materials are key to success.

The repair of miniature books requires special materials. A good example of which is the very thin and exceptionally strong Tengu-jo tissue available from the “Japanese Paper Place” in Toronto. The strength of this very thin tissue comes from the length and quality of its fibers.

Having said this, it is important to stress that it is a difficult material to use, because it tends to disintegrate when paste is brushed onto it. In order to overcome this problem, *first* brush your paste onto the area to be strengthened, and only then carefully place the tissue onto it.

*Photo: Tengu-jo tissue*



## Book Joints

For repairs to book joints, I cut pieces of the Tengu-jo tissue to the height of the end-leaves and approximately 3/8 of an inch wide. Note that for best results, the tissue is severed with the point of a needle, which produces a soft edge and allows it to be gently pulled apart. I've found that soft-edged tissue tends to discourage further breakage of the old paper on which I am working. With joint repairs it is important to place the book on a stand. Then, while holding the board open with one hand, paste both sides of the joint with a thin starch paste and use tweezers to insert the folded strip of tissue.

Then "spread" the fold by placing the tips of the tweezers in the middle of the 'V' of tissue and gently opening them. At this point the Tengu-jo will instantly adhere. Then place a folded piece of polyester web (enclosing a strip of Mylar) into the fold, push the tissue into the joint with the Mylar, and after closing the book, put a weight on it and let it dry.

*Photo: Book Joint*



## Headcaps

For headcaps, tiny pieces of tissue are placed on the already pasted area to be strengthened, gently rubbed down through a thin polyester web and finished with a Teflon folder directly onto the tissue. If the color is still not quite right, a Q-Tip dipped in color, rolled on newsprint until almost dry and then gently rolled over the repair will tone it down.

## Displays that also protect

Here are two solutions to the problem of getting miniature volumes out of their shelves without damaging them.

1. **Philatelist's tweezers** with their highly-polished, flat jaws will not hurt the bindings, however they do not open very wide so can only be used on really small volumes.

*Photo: Headcap Repair*



2. For more substantial books, place a **band of vellum** around one volume on each shelf to serve as a pull tab.

Use a strip of thin paper to measure the book's exact dimension. Make the tab by cutting a narrow strip of light-weight vellum long enough to wrap round the book plus one

inch. Transfer the exact dimension from the paper to the vellum, allowing an extra half inch at each end. Just a hair beyond where the exact dimension marks fall, cut half way through the width of the vellum from opposite sides.

*Photo: Tweezers and Rotating Case*



Finish by punching a circle of holes in the vellum, to decorate and soften the look of the ends. Wrap round the book and slip the cuts into one another. To take the book from the shelf, pull on the decorative tabs while restraining the adjacent books.

Working on all four of my Shakespeare sets, I have made boxes for the Bryce's Illustrated Pocket Shakespeare in eight volumes and the 1825 Pickering set in green cloth.

A thirty-seven volume, 2-1/8 inches by 1-3/8 inch, David Bryce set, dedicated to Ellen Terry is lucky enough to be housed in a rotating wooden bookcase. A second set of the 1825 Pickering, bound in blue cloth, resides in its own upright wooden bookcase with a glass door. All the many bindings required restoration with the end-leaf joints or the cloth head caps needing strengthening.



*Photo: Decorative Vellum Pull Tab Protects Shelved Items*







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### *Thank you for voting in the MBS election*

The newly elected members of the Board of Governors for 2021-2022 are:

**Treasurer:** Kim Herrick

**Secretary:** Cynthia Cosgrove

**Members at Large:** Stephen Byrne and Todd Sommerfeld

**Your vote mattered!**

## Miniature Book Society

### Board of Governors 2020

President: Tony Firman  
VP: Ron Wood  
Secretary: Cynthia Cosgrove  
Treasurer: Kim Herrick

### Members-At-Large

Stephen Byrne  
Erika Clew  
Darleen Cordova  
Todd Sommerfeld

Membership is open to all individuals, organizations, and institutions with an interest in miniature books.

### Membership dues (U.S. dollars)

#### United States:

\$40-Personal/Family  
\$50-Business

#### Canada:

\$45-Personal/Family  
\$55-Business

#### Other Countries:

\$55-Personal/Family  
\$65-Business

### Membership inquiries and dues

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## Newsletter

### Publisher

Miniature Book Society, Inc.

### Editor

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### Consulting Editor

Neale Albert

Issued in February, June, September. Items for publication must be family friendly and related to miniature books and should be sent to the editor, Donna Knoell.

MBS, Inc reserves the right to refuse any item deemed inappropriate. Submissions should be made electronically by email. MS Word is preferred (PDF only if no alternatives). Images should be JPEGs and include complete copyright/permissions/credits.

#### Deadline for the next issue:

January 1, 2021

Please send **articles for review** to [dmknoell@gmail.com](mailto:dmknoell@gmail.com)

Please send **inquiries regarding ad rates and print-ready ads** to [dmknoell@gmail.com](mailto:dmknoell@gmail.com)

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## Miniature Book Society 2020 Annual Awards

The **Anderson-Yarnell Award** honors a significant contribution to the MBS. This year it goes to **Lori Dekydtspotter** for organizing an excellent Conclave in Bloomington, Indiana, in 2019.

The **Norman W. Forgue Award** is given for outstanding contribution to the world of miniature books. This year it goes to **Tine Krijnen** in recognition of the work she has been doing for years promoting miniature books in Europe.

The **Glasgow Cup Award** is given to a member who has shown special dedication to the membership, and who keeps alive that special spirit so evident at our founding in 1983. This year it goes to **Gail Faulkner** for her services as Secretary of the Board of Governors for the past four years, and especially for her enormous assistance during a time of transition for the Board.

