

Jean-Marie Tarascio

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“Tangled Fibers” group of 4
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Member of Northwest Designer Craftartists
nwdesignercraftartists.org



Bio: Making books and paper have held a prominent place in my life for many years.

Training in the field of book and paper restoration at the University of Utah provided a valuable foundation in the history, science, and art of books and paper. Apprenticeships and classes in book design, bookbinding, paper making, and letterpress printing kindled my desire to learn more.

A year-long internship in rare book conservation at the Library of Congress provided an opportunity to explore an extraordinary collection of rare and unusual books from around the world. This experience sparked an interest and passion for both traditional and non-traditional book structures.

Following the L.C. internship, I returned to the University of Utah’s library conservation lab and was offered the opportunity to begin a Book Arts program. The University established a limited-edition fine press under the imprint Red Butte Press. The small editions were printed on an 1846 Columbian handpress. I caught the bug for letterpress printing and eventually bought my own cylinder handpress to print small books of poetry and broadsides.

A move to the Pacific Northwest began a new adventure. Participating in the States artist-in-the-school program, I traveled throughout Utah, Idaho, and Washington, teaching bookmaking across the curriculum in grades K-12. Teaching children inspired me to explore and expand the concept of the “book” in exciting and unusual ways, such as creating a 5’ wooden accordion Haiku book, a book inside a sea shell, and books that hung from the ceiling and climbed up the wall.

After years of traveling as an artist in residence, I accepted a position as Youth Service Librarian at the Port Townsend Public Library in my hometown! Surrounded by books and children eager to try writing, illustrating, and binding small books, it was a very rewarding and exciting experience.

Today, while having retired from the library, I continue to be fully involved in creating mixed media artist books and paper sculptures. My work may be seen in local and regional exhibits.

Artist Statement: I am a maker of mixed media sculpture and one-of-a-kind artist books. Recently I have been working with paper, clay, and wire, exploring their diverse tactile, manipulative, and versatile properties. Nature is my inspiration for creating. I am intrigued and in awe of the ever-changing patterns, shapes, colors, textures, and rhythms I encounter in my garden, nearby woods, and shore.

My artwork is created from recycled papers such as tea bags, sewing patterns, coffee filters, handmade papers, natural fibers, and found objects.

The simple repetitive techniques of Arashi Shibori, Shifu, Joomshi, and Felting are adapted to create texture and character on paper. A wire armature provides flexibility and movement, bringing the pieces to life.

My work can be seen in local and regional art exhibits and in the Artist Book Collection at Bainbridge Island Arts Museum.

Showing now in the BIMA Spotlight exhibit: *“Seed Pearls”* is a mixed media wall piece, clay and wood seed pod, dried poppy seeds, cheesecloth, felted Thai Chiri Unryu paper, and wrapped wire. NFS

“Summer’s End” is a mixed media hanging seed pod of recycled tea bags, dyed Chiri Unryu paper, clay, bark, and wrapped wire.

Artworks from website:

“Unfurling” NFS
mixed media, hanging
handmade paper, cheesecloth, bark,
tea bags, clay, and wire.



“Words on a Journey” BIMA
Altered Books, handmade papers
Adinkra symbols, hidden totems
Build a Book format

“Book of Seeds” NFS
Mixed media, hanging



Chiri Mulberry paper,
recycled tea bags, clay, wire

