

Bookbinding Masterclass

Dates	Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 January 2022
Times	10.30–17.00
Location	Harry M Weinrebe Learning Centre
Level	Beginners and those with some previous experience
Class size	Maximum 16 participants

Course description

Take inspiration from the world's greatest collection of books at our creative masterclass. On this two-day course you will be introduced to a range of book structures and will learn the intricate art of folding, stitching and hand-binding to produce a number of your own books. You will learn the importance of paper grain in bookbinding, and experiment with folding and stitching techniques to create various book forms, including pamphlets and fanfolds. Over the weekend we will work towards creating a number of personalised case bindings – books with covers – incorporating various book art techniques.

Our course is designed to help you develop skills in handling and choosing appropriate tools and materials for creating hand bindings – with and without specialist equipment. You will be encouraged to explore your own ideas of design and production, and will gain the knowledge to develop your interests and skills at home.

Saturday: pamphlets, fanfolds and single-section books

Our masterclass begins with investigating the book itself. We will hear from a conservator from the British Library Centre for Conservation, discuss and handle different structures, and explore the different techniques for binding a book. You will become familiar with specialist tools, materials and methods. Back in our studio we will fold, sew and bind simple pamphlets and fanfold books, introduce Japanese binding and develop our skills by learning to case bind. Our aim by the end of day one is to produce three non-adhesive bindings and one simple case-bound, single-section book.

Sunday: multi-section books

In our second session we will develop the skills gained in day one to create a multi-section case binding that you can use as a sketchbook or journal. You will learn how to fold, stitch and bind multiple sections, prepare and line book spines, incorporate decorative endpapers and assemble the components in a cloth binding. We will introduce you to various ways of individualising your book, including embossing. We will finish our masterclass with an informal group critique of the works we've produced over the weekend.

Feedback from previous Bookbinding Masterclass participants

“The overall experience was terrific, balancing the time spent in practical activity with access and information on the work and conservation of the British Library.”

“I had very high expectations of the course and am very happy with what we did. I have a much clearer and deeper understanding of bookbinding, the practical making skills – the possibilities opening from that and being able to understand the books I own.”

Tutors

This masterclass is led by artist **Shelagh McCarthy**. Shelagh is a bookbinder and printmaker with a wealth of experience teaching adults with a broad range of abilities. As well as regularly contributing to the British Library’s learning programmes, she has designed and led creative workshops and courses for various London institutions including Central Saint Martins, the British Museum, Battersea Arts Centre and *The Guardian* Education Centre.

We will also be joined by a conservator from the British Library Centre for Conservation.

Previous skills, knowledge or experience

None required. This course is suitable for beginners or those with some knowledge of bookbinding who would like to refresh their skills.

Equipment and materials

All materials will be provided. During the course we will cover the particular health and safety instructions for using our press, and other specialist equipment and materials.

Facilities and refreshments

On Saturday please gather outside the Harry M Weinrebe Learning Centre on the lower ground floor from 10.15am. The course will begin promptly at 10.30am.

On Sunday, participants will gain entry to the British Library via **Gate 5** on Midland Road. **Please meet at Gate 5 from 10.15 on the day** and you will be escorted into the building at 10.25am. Further instructions will be emailed to you in advance of the course.

Tea and coffee will be provided in the morning each day. Participants should make their own arrangements for lunch.

Accessibility

Please email adultlearning@bl.uk to discuss your access needs and we will do our best to meet them.
