

Artist to Artist  
*An Alabama-Cuba Book Project*



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA BOOK ARTS PROGRAM began in 1985, and emphasizes the art and craft of making books by hand. We are located in the School of Library and Information Studies, College of Communication and Information Sciences, in Tuscaloosa.

The program, leading to the Master of Fine Arts in the Book Arts degree, is a 60-credit hour course of study comprising bookbinding, hand papermaking, history of the book, and letterpress printing and publishing. Our emphasis is on the book as a whole, and connections between the study areas are made as often as possible. We provide students with a hands-on educational experience based on historical principles and techniques. This promotes the development of good craft skills and an ability to cultivate artistic expression.

Our graduates are teachers, artists, crafts persons, and administrators. They are practitioners of designing and creating books by hand. This devotion to the craft is part of a contemporary trend that speaks to the human need for handmade work in the fast-paced world of computers and escalating technology.

THE ALABAMA-CUBA BOOK PROJECT began in January of 2003 when The University of Alabama sent representatives from nearly every division of the University to participate in a weeklong trip to Cuba. The purpose of the trip was to create ties between UA and The University of Havana, and between government representatives from Cuba and the United States.

Book Arts faculty member Steve Miller traveled to Cuba as a representative of the College of Communication and Information Sciences. While there he visited artists and craftspeople in Havana and Matanzas. With the aid of a translator, Professor Miller was able to discuss the work being done by these artists. He found many talented individuals who were eager to collaborate with the Alabama program on a book project.

Inspired by the collaborative spirit of the Cuban artists, Professor Miller contacted Billy Collins, United States Poet Laureate (2001-2003). He proposed a bilingual edition of the poet's work, to be illustrated by the Havana artist Carlos "Tato" Ayres Moreno, and to be designed, printed and bound as a collaborative project between Alabama and Cuba. Billy Collins immediately endorsed the project, and connected Professor Miller with a team of Latin American poets who are translating the poet's work into Spanish. They readily agreed to work on the book.

The Alabama-Cuba book project will commence in mid-October when the translations are complete. Artists and crafts persons working in both countries will produce a Cuban and an American edition of the book. Students and faculty from the Book Arts program will travel to Cuba to work on the project, and "Tato" will travel to Alabama to exhibit his work, and assist in the book's production.

THE BOOK ARTS PROGRAM INVITES YOUR PARTICIPATION in this exciting educational venture. Your support will enable students and faculty in the Book Arts Program to travel to Cuba to collaborate with printmakers, papermakers, and book artists on this very special book. It will allow us to bring artist Carlos Ayress Moreno to the University to work with our graduate students, and solidify ongoing artistic relationships.

THIS KEEPSAKE HAS BEEN CREATED by students and faculty in the Book Arts Program. The type are Jenson and Garamond. The image printed on the wrapper was created by applying leather shavings from the bindery onto a plywood board, covering it with muslin and gel medium, inking the board, and printing it by hand on a Vandercook Proof Press. For more information about the Book Arts Program go to [www.bookarts.ua.edu](http://www.bookarts.ua.edu), or contact Steve Miller at [steve@ua.edu](mailto:steve@ua.edu). September 2003.