

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 779****Your Name**

Dorothy Smith

**Email**[dotcostume@gmail.com](mailto:dotcostume@gmail.com)**Your Working Title:**

In the Beginning Was the Broadside or Broadsides for Democracy

**Topic:**

Using contemporary broadsides, a historic means of expression, to document current attacks on democracy

**Inspiration:**

In April 2017 I attended the March for Science in DC and was blown away by the handmade posters. They were joyous, science-based, and funny (see slideshow in Attached document below). These human signs, often made by families, made me hopeful and proud to be an American. In the current climate, homemade signs have made me want to share and amplify the voices of our fellows who are suffering retribution for their service to the country or just being who they are.

In mid-February I arrived at a local Italian restaurant in Charlottesville just after an ICE raid on the kitchen (the officers said they were doing “community outreach”. On the 5pm TV news that night, I heard the tail-end of coverage of another ICE sweep that day; a Latina was saying, “I want people to know that they are targeting Hispanic grocery stores.” I expected to see a story about the raids on the 6 o'clock news, but saw no reporting on either local station or the newspaper next day. Why were ICE raids in town not reported? Management censorship? Government proscription against reporting them? Our local encounters with ICE were quickly replaced in the news cycle by some other affront to democracy.

About a week later during a VBAC Printing History Intensive, I was introduced to the Scholar's Lab in Shannon Library, which describes its mission as the “intersection of technology and culture”. In the lab all kind of making goes on, using all kind of tools from 3-D printers to sewing machines, including digital printing presses. Right by the door is a rack of “zines”—printed pamphlets for broad circulation. The zine “Don't Just Do Nothing: 20 Things You Can Do to Counter Fascism—Yes, You! Yes, Now” was written by self-identified Jewish anarchists as a continuation of the work of all the ancestors who have struggled for freedom. The pamphlet is headed by the famous Jewish quote, “You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.”—Pirkei Avot (2:21). [<https://itsgoingdown.org/dont-just-do-nothing-20-things-you-can-do-to-counter-fascism/>] The kids produced this preparation for resistance back in November 2024.

Another zine DIY Web Archiving from Zine Bakery leads with the headlines “Things Vanish from the Internet\*, \*sometimes are deliberately disappeared, Care about stuff on the Internet?, \*You\* need to act to archive it, Anyone can do it—this zine shows you how.” [<https://zinebakery.com/homemade-zines/bakeshop-2-diywebarchiving>] Students and educators are putting free tools out on the Internet for other dissenters to download and use in their work.

Many activist newsletters are using woodblock printing images to lend street cred to their activities. Check out an image from the C'ville Dems Newsletter of Feb16 drawing attention to the list of upcoming nationwide economic boycotts:

[Hopefully in additional documents below]

Online newsletter Meditations in an Emergency headed the article “The She Made Him Do It Theory of Everything” by R. Solnit with a woodcut print pasted on a wall in Oaxaca, Mexico, Jan 2025:

[Hopefully in additional documents below]

Note the broadside stylings already in use at the Zine Bakery.

I have already been deeply moved and entertained by two posters seen at demonstrations in little old Charlottesville. NOT WITHOUT ZELENSKY (against Trump's private meeting with Putin to divvy up Ukraine) brought tears to my eyes. IF IT LOOKS LIKE A COUP, AND WALKS LIKE A COUP, IT IS A COUP (with COUP inside a woodcut-like duck outline) made me grin.

**Concept:**

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For each aggression against an institution or job or law or category of protected people, the members collective will create a broadside. Each one will be based on a homemade sign by a demonstrator who is speaking from the heart—which means speaking from all our hearts. We will scour news coverage of each mass demonstration for protestor posters and as a group pick the best one to represent standing up to that particular action against American rights and values. Members can choose which broadside they wish to design.

Why broadsides? Broadsides are the historic backbone of the printing press. Long before the English speaking populous was even literate, they were used to share news and opinion. The most famous American broadside is the Declaration of Independence—printed fast and spread wide.

Who better than the VBAC to record history in real time using their historic Vandercook printing press? Each broadside will be created first as an archival art form limited edition, then possibly turned into something more populous, like posters for telephone poles, and finally, following the students' lead, posted on the Internet for free use by activists. At the very least a visual archive of demonstrations all over the country will be valuable to future Americans.

I am told that the UVA rare books library has an extensive holding of broadsides. A visit there for the project collective to look at broadsides against the government (Vietnam War, votes for women) would be an education and inspiration by citizen activists from our past as well as a source of styles and images.

I believe this project could engage members with different skills in ways that suit them best. Here is a tentative list of responsibilities: Track down photographs of demonstrations against various depredations (we will need to play catch up), select and enlarge handmade posters (not the people, just the posters) from each event for members to choose from, accurately identify the event details, date, location, etc. for labeling cheaper, widely distributed reproductions, design the broadside, prepare type and images, arrange printing parties for each broadside, handle copywriting of the broadside as appropriate, arrange next steps for smaller-format bulk copying and distribution, collaborate with Scholars Lab and Zine Bakery about disseminating original images to other groups, prepare food for large group activities like printing events. I believe those interested could function like a collective.

### Form/Structure:

A limited edition set of broadsides documenting protest against attacks on our institutions and values.

### Skill-Building:

See Concept above

### Additional Notes/Comments

I understand perfectly that the VBAC may be unable to consider this as a member project because it is too partisan for a government backed entity such as the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. However, every single list of suggestions for action in this time, says, "Do not obey in advance," "Do not self-censor," Do not cede power to authoritarianism."

[<https://wagingnonviolence.org/2024/11/10-things-to-do-if-trump-wins/>] And of course there needs to be respect for people who support the Trump Administration. Perhaps this submission should not be posted at this time for the member project. I certainly don't want to embarrass the VBAC, much less create a fracas about political activism before any product is there to be adjudicated. I am wondering if this idea could go forward as a "smaller collaboration initiated by individual members" as Bonnie describes it. You guys know everything about printing and printers and presses in the larger area. Could we have a conversation about possibly borrowing your fat type or perhaps composing a page at the Center and printing elsewhere. All help appreciated. Thanks for your consideration. Dorothy Smith

### Attach Documents:

- [Boycott-from-Dems-newsletter.png](#)
- [March-for-Science-Washington-DC-April-22-2017-1.m4v](#)

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 761****Your Name**

Bonnie Bernstein

**Email**[bonnie.bernstein@gmail.com](mailto:bonnie.bernstein@gmail.com)**Your Working Title:**

Contemporary Trade Cards

**Topic:**

Trade cards for the post-industrial era

**Inspiration:**

Cigarette cards were a once-popular kind of printed ephemera that tobacco companies offered as premiums in cigarette packs (they helped to stiffen the sides). They are the precursors to today's themed trading cards.

I'm particularly taken with a set of cards called "London Characters" (see the blog Spitalfields Life) that depict the likes of The Crossing Sweeper, The Coffee-Stall Keeper, The Flower-Seller, The Hyde Park Orator, The Newsboy, and The Pavement Artist. The "characters" in this set and in similar Street Crier sets represent a wide variety of trades, both respectful and scurrilous. They were the people in your neighborhood if you lived in late 19th/early 20th century London.

London Characters in the Spitalfields Life blog:  
<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2023/01/25/london-characters-x/>

**Concept:**

Who are the archetypal characters in 21st century America? Who represents our workforce in the post-industrial, digital age? Who are the people in our "neighborhoods" (actual and virtual) today? For example: Coffee Shop Barista, Influencer, Political Pundit, Cryptocurrency Broker, Climate Activist, Virologist, AI Investigator, Food Pantry Distributor, Dog-Walker... you get the idea.

The cards could be two-sided, with a title character on front and a description of the character's vocation, perhaps with faux advertising related to this vocation, on back. Although the original cigarette cards were very small and slender, ours can be a bit larger, maybe baseball card size.

This project could be done in small teams (as with Pack of Lies) that brainstorm a specific number of characters each, how they will be depicted, and what will be on the back of the card. Individual team members could each be responsible for producing one card.

**Form/Structure:**

Small boxed or packaged collection of trading cards OR a small album (stab binding) to hold the collection

**Skill-Building:**

Collaboration, typesetting, letterpress, caricature, album binding (or other packaging or box-making technique)

**Additional Notes/Comments**

Our past projects involving sets of cards have had good participation. This concept has the advantage of combining text and artwork. A disadvantage is that the illustration aspect could lead many participants to choose to use polymer plates, which is not as

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hands-on as other techniques like linocut.

A design team could come up with common elements like typefaces and positions of the illustration and vocation name to give some cohesion to the card set. Or something we haven't done before – select one artist to do the illustrations (e.g., caricature drawings) and all other project participants do the rest.

### Attach Documents:

- [london-characters\\_0004\\_4.webp](#)

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 758****Your Name**

Garrett Queen

**Email**

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**Your Working Title:**

The Best Fake Books—Made Real

**Topic:**

Facsimiles of books that never existed or cannot be found

**Inspiration:**

This New York Times article has been making the rounds among our Book Arts folk and might be the basis for a project.

These Books Are Absolutely Unreadable. That's the Point.

A new exhibition at the Center for Book Arts in New York features a range of items — transistor radios, lanterns, cigarette lighters and more — designed to look like books.

[https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/23/books/review/book-shaped-objects.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.004.wOkD.wEUfdjYMqkSF&smid=url-share](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/23/books/review/book-shaped-objects.html?unlocked_article_code=1.004.wOkD.wEUfdjYMqkSF&smid=url-share)

Also...

Here's a project that creates a library of imaginary volumes.

The Best Fake Books—Made Real

At the Grolier Club, in midtown, a collection of imaginary volumes—the play within “Hamlet,” Hemingway’s lost first novel—are bound, scuffed, and shelved.

By Zach Helfand

[https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/02/10/the-best-fake-books-made-real?\\_sp=4af28c5b-34fe-46ca-93fc-87b2f6c47b97.1740406271927](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/02/10/the-best-fake-books-made-real?_sp=4af28c5b-34fe-46ca-93fc-87b2f6c47b97.1740406271927)

**Concept:**

The linked articles detail the concept.

**Form/Structure:**

Book structures

**Skill-Building:**

Concept - Design - Execution of form

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 564****Your Name**

Elizabeth Schneiders

**Email**

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**Your Working Title:**

Little Free Library Guerilla Art

**Inspiration:**

This idea is inspired by guerilla art/found art movement that aim to enrich the community by leaving art in public places for anyone to discover and enjoy. It is democratic, non-commercial and there is an element of surprise.

The Guerilla Art Kit by Keri Smith is one resource.

One artist on Instagram hides art in public places and leave clues on where to find them. He has garnered a loyal fanbase who enjoy the chance to find and own a small piece of art.

**Concept:**

Little free libraries are popping up all around our community. Their accessibility, charm and grassroots nature are a refreshing counterpoint to the commercial marketplace. If you love books and reading, it's hard to pass these libraries by without giving them a quick browse to see if the perfect book might just be waiting for you.

My idea is for our members to create a broad collection of quick-to-make pocket-sized blank books with interesting covers and titles that we could periodically distribute among the little libraries within our community. The idea is to create small works of art that are accessible to the general public and offer an element of surprise and delight. Each book would contain an enclosed card promoting our book art courses and an email/social tag where lucky recipients can share comments/pics of their finds.

**Form/Structure:**

Small, quick to make pocket-sized book structures. Could be accordion or saddle stitch. We could add fun pockets or lino bookplates..

**Skill-Building:**

Skills could range from collage, basic saddle stitch binding methods to accordion books with

**Additional Notes/Comments**

I see this as offering interesting possibilities for collaboration. Group brainstorming of book titles or structures. Mini workshops on simple book forms or book plate designs. Exploring pocket-size book formats that could use our big stash of recently acquired paper. We could organize beginner-friendly sessions for embellishing cover papers, typesetting short titles, and assembling large batches of books quickly.

While the goal is for the majority of these to be given away individually, we could reserve a limited number of each book that we create and sell them as a set.

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 551****Your Name**

Janet Eden

**Email**

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**Your Working Title:**

The Bucket List

**Topic:**

Bucket list for or against

**Inspiration:**

An article I read that talked about a man's desire not to have a bucket list like everyone he knew. He knew he would probably never do the shit.....so his is an anti-bucket list.

**Form/Structure:**

Each person could make their own structure, scroll, according folded or small binding.

**Skill-Building:**

many

**Additional Notes/Comments**

Maybe they could be put into a real or made bucket.....

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 550****Your Name**

Janet Eden

**Email**

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**Your Working Title:**

Something like "From the ???? Desk"

**Topic:**

Executive Orders

**Inspiration:**

From all the insane things coming from Trumps ex. orders: such as the elimination of paper straws, because sharks can eat plastic ones.

**Form/Structure:**

??

**Skill-Building:**

printing, bookmaking polymer making, etc. depending on the structure maybe pop ups



**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 542****Your Name**

Molly Turner

**Email**[mollylazeear@gmail.com](mailto:mollylazeear@gmail.com)**Your Working Title:**

Impossible Monsters/Monstruos Imposibles

**Topic:**

Fantastical beasts and typographical nightmares inspired by Francisco de Goya's series of 80 prints, Los Caprichos

**Inspiration:**

1) Francisco de Goya's series of 80 prints (all with titles/captions) entitled Los Caprichos (The Caprices), from 1797-98, has elements of both fantasy and political satire. The most famous Capricho is probably "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters," (El sueño de la razón produce monstruos) which shows a sleeping artist surrounded by owls and bats. A caption used for that print at the time (perhaps it was written by Goya, perhaps not) slightly restates the sentiment as:

"Imagination (or fantasy) abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters; united with her, she is the mother of the arts and source of their wonders". («La fantasía abandonada de la razón produce monstruos imposibles: unida con ella es madre de las artes y origen de las maravillas»)

The Wikipedia page is comprehensive and shows the prints, too, at the bottom. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los\\_caprichos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_caprichos) I also found this on-line catalog from Yale Art Gallery useful: <https://artgallery.yale.edu/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/ag-doc-2331-0001-doc.pdf>

2) also inspired by one of Josef Beery's teaching exercises for kids on the Book Beetle--he has them make a fantastical beast (out of foam) and then name it, to be a part of a larger collection (a Bestiary). This is in a way an adult version of that.

**Concept:**

A series of pages or cards of fantastical beasts. There would be some overall parameters, perhaps based on Goya (i.e. black and white with tints) but there would be the possibility for many types of images, including ones that are solely typographical.

Many of Goya's images are pointed political satire, but others are simply dreams and caprices. I like the idea that whoever gets involved in this project could go in either direction, and also could choose to focus on words or a drawing, or both.

Inventing fantastical beasts is something that can be done collaboratively, like the surrealist game of The Exquisite Corpse, done by both writers and artists. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/cadavre-exquis-exquisite-corpse>. Something to do on Block Night?

Also, possibility of reserving some pages/cards for schoolkids....

**Form/Structure:**

I can see either a book or a box of cards. If a book, one possibility would be to have English title on the front and Spanish on the back, upside down (or vice versa)

**Attach Documents:**

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- [Francisco Jose de Goya y Lucientes - The sleep of reason produces monsters No. 43 from Los Caprichos - Google Art Project.jpg](#)

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 533****Your Name**

Bonnie Bernstein

**Email**

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**Your Working Title:**

No, This Way [replace with a palindromic title]

**Topic:**

Palindromes

**Inspiration:**

Palindromic word play (words, lines, sentences, and number sets that read the same backwards and forwards)

VCB's extraordinary but underutilized collection of metal type.

**Concept:**

Publishing a quirky edition of original palindromes to showcase typefaces in the VCB's substantial collection of metal type -- and the offbeat creativity of VCB book artists.

Participants compose palindromes on their own and in collaboration. A selection may be illustrated using a method agreed on by participating printmakers. (Note: linocuts and polymer are easiest to edition because they can be put on a press.)

The project may include visual palindromes, including ambigrams like those by puzzle master Scott Kim (see link in notes).

The book art itself can be palindromic. For example, the accordion panels (see structure) might be framed in palindromic border art. The belt that holds the covers together may be imprinted with a palindrome.

**Form/Structure:**

The playful content inspires a corresponding structure: an accordion book in which a two-sided accordion is pasted between two boards that both serve as front covers. The accordion reads two ways, depending on which end you open first. Even the cover boards can be wallpapered in palindromic art.

**Skill-Building:**

Identifying typefaces, hand setting type, letterpress printing, covering boards, making an accordion book.

**Additional Notes/Comments**

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Scott Kim's ambigram:

<https://www.scottkim.com/post/mirror-1981>

Palindromes with a clever lead-ins:

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/literary-devices/16-surprisingly-funny-palindromes/>

How to construct a palindrome:

<https://languagelover.org/2023/01/23/writing-palindrome-sentences/>

**Attach Documents:**

- [MIRROR.pdf](#)

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 415****Your Name**

Bonnie Bernstein

**Email**

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**Your Working Title:**

Alexa, make a book!

**Topic:**

Appreciating the handmade and hand-held book in the age of AI

**Inspiration:**

The inspiration came from listening to my kids and their kids attempt to outsmart the persona of Alexa, Amazon's "cloud-based voice service," by issuing ludicrous commands and eliciting clueless responses.

The voice of Alexa sounds human and can search a universe of human-generated information, but "she" cannot perform tasks that require human hands and the materials they work with. When stumped, Alexa responds with simple, formulaic replies: I'm sorry, I can't do that. I'm sorry, I don't understand, etc.

**Concept:**

Imagine a "dialogue" between a book artist and Alexa as the artist challenges her step-by-step to produce the elements of a handmade book, from folding a folio to pasting down endpapers. The back-and-forth between them will offer readers an overview of the process and skills that go into making a book -- including the very one they hold in their hands.

The overt message: Appreciate the work that goes into making a book.

**Form/Structure:**

A hand-sewn, case-bound book.

**Skill-Building:**

Setting type, imposition, printing, binding -- everything we do!

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 305****Your Name**

Nancy Kober

**Email**

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**Your Working Title:**

Addendum to Busy Brains Puzzle Book

**Topic:**

I want to amend the project idea I already submitted to expand it to all types of puzzles -- not just word puzzles. Could be a visual puzzle without words

**Form/Structure:**

See my previous entry -- puzzle book

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 304****Your Name**

Erica Goldfarb

**Email**

[ericag1223@gmail.com](mailto:ericag1223@gmail.com)

**Your Working Title:**

Musical Books

**Topic:**

play off of the old "books" for storing heavy vinyl records

**Inspiration:**

Vinyl collections were stored by theme in a heavy bound "book". Each page consisted of a round cutout to see the name of the particular record.

We inherited a couple of such books from old friends.

**Concept:**

Each participant could design a Center Label. We could either each pick a particular genre, or fantasy theme for their label. All would be mounted on a board vinyl "record" and placed in pages with the round center cut out to expose the label.

<https://www.etsy.com/listing/1236381516/record-folder-storage-album-binder-for?gpla=1&gao=1&>

Sort of... what I'm thinking of but not exactly. see attached photos.

Hardcover book with cloth hinge, endbands. Would be preferable that the book could lie flat when opened.

A box for the book could be an option.

**Form/Structure:**

above

**Skill-Building:**

printing or design, binding and book covers, optional box building

**Attach Documents:**

- [IMG\\_7289.jpeg](#)
- [IMG\\_7286.jpeg](#)
- [IMG\\_7288.jpeg](#)

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 290****Your Name**

Molly Turner

**Email**[mollylazeear@gmail.com](mailto:mollylazeear@gmail.com)**Your Working Title:**

Paper Dolls? Doll House?

**Topic:**

dolls!

**Inspiration:**

inspired by dolls in the cultural moment--the Barbie movie and the movie now playing at Violet Crown, Poor Things, which is a modern take on Frankenstein (haven't seen it yet)...inspirations from every culture, every era...for example: the ballet Coppelia based on ETA Hoffman's story The Sandman, Hopi Kachinas, paper dolls, Russian nesting dolls, American Girl dolls, Nutcracker, toy soldiers, GI Joes, Barbies, baby dolls, inflatable dolls, cornhusk dolls, Ruth Bader Ginsberg dolls. (also horror movie dolls--I can't watch horror movies, but I know some of them involve dolls!)

<https://www.pinterest.com/teastanding/alterd-book-doll-project/>

<https://www.niada.org/niadahistory/>

<https://www.womenshistory.org/articles/history-paper-dolls-and-popular-culture>

<https://bookriot.com/paper-doll-history/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/2006/11/29/the-unkindest-cut-a-history-of-black-paper-dolls/4c6fb630-9ccc-447c-9cd1-65e14ddb0d56/>

**Concept:**

What is our cultural fascination with dolls? How do they affect us in childhood, and how do we view them as adults? what happens when we give them power (like in the Barbie fantasy)? How do recent advances in technology, from plastic surgery to AI and cloning, intersect with our ideas (and fears) about dolls?

possible directions:

- sort of an historical overview, each artist focusing on whichever doll or doll concept they want, different approaches, all assembled in a box or a book
- or perhaps we all specifically focus on Dolls with Power, Dolls Come to Life, Dolls Coming to Life
- I don't know if this is feasible, but maybe the whole project could somehow be an dollhouse, with each part of it a different room
- or a focus on paper dolls....perhaps we could make 40 giant paper dolls--collages of all that everyone produces!

**Form/Structure:**

perhaps a 3D dollhouse? or if that is not feasible, assemblage of elements (see above)



**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 289****Your Name**

Richard Cappuccio

**Email**

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**Your Working Title:**

A Garden of Poems

**Topic:**

Anne Spencer's Poetry and Garden

**Inspiration:**

My favorite garden is that of Anne Spencer, the poet who lived in Lynchburg. Her poems are not readily available -- even though one can visit her garden any day one is in Lynchburg.

**Concept:**

A portfolio of poems by Anne Spencer and images inspired by her work or garden. Spencer lived in Lynchburg, VA, and her house and garden are open to the public. It would be great to partner, in some way, with the UVA which acquired her library or the African American Cultural Center at the Jefferson School.

**Form/Structure:**

TBD

**Skill-Building:**

setting type, illustration (botanical or abstract), printing, binding/housing

**2025 Annual Members' Project Pitch : Entry # 282****Your Name**

Nancy Kober

**Email**

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**Your Working Title:**

Busy Brains Puzzle Book

**Topic:**

Collection of word puzzles -- could be crosswords, word searches, cryptograms, logic problems, mystery with clues, or any kind of real or invented word game or puzzle

**Inspiration:**

Special sections of newspapers with different kinds of puzzles  
Crossword and word search puzzle books found in drugstores and grocery stores

**Concept:**

Each artist or team designs a word puzzle of any type or a newly invented form. The design may use creative approaches beyond the traditional puzzle formats or invent a new format.

**Form/Structure:**

Individual pages bound into a book of a hand-held size that would allow people to actually work the puzzles

**Skill-Building:**

Design, typesetting, letterpress, binding