

A MOVING SEA
ARTIST STATEMENT

DESCRIPTION *A Moving Sea* is an altered book/unique book/handmade box that illustrates my ideas about love, marriage and the connection between two individuals.

PROCESS & MEANING *A Moving Sea* was inspired by a period of question, doubt and curiosity that I had experienced in my life regarding my marriage and definition of self, which coincidentally had occurred during the year before my younger sister's wedding, in the fall of 2009. At her wedding, my cousin read a combination of 1 Corinthians 13 and text she had drafted specifically for the occasion. I decided to use the Bible verse and text as a jumping off point to explore the act/ritual/ceremony of marriage; a union between two people, surrounded by family and friends, as they embark on a new journey in life from being separate to together, as one.

Because I believe that marriage in itself is a big (ongoing) experiment, I decided to construct a non-traditional/experimental book structure. From the exterior, the book appears to be a standard Bible. However, when the viewer opens the Bible, he/she will discover that it is fully excavated, within which rests a small, glass book.

When the glass book is removed, the viewer/reader can extend the accordion structure to read the words from 1 Corinthians 13 interspersed with my cousin's interpretation, as well as a third interpretation. This third interpretation is my personal take on what love and marriage mean, using language from the Bible verse and my cousin's prose. All three interpretations are differentiated by expressive typography in a way that makes it possible to read the entire piece as one, two or three different works as desired. The text was printed onto the glass using waterslide decals and the images were hand drawn and then etched into the glass. The effect of the etched images and semi-translucent text gives an ethereal feeling, almost as if the viewer/reader is taking in the book while underwater. This is in keeping with the quote at the beginning of the structure, by Kahlil Gibran on the subject of love: "let it rather be a moving sea between two souls". Furthermore, there are many imperfections in the glass and text transfer, which causes the text to be difficult to interpret in certain places. This was done on purpose to further illustrate that love, and marriage for that matter, are not perfect and thus one must constantly work at them in order to find happiness.

The glass book is housed within the Bible, which is held within a handmade box structure. The box latches closed with a heard shaped lock and key, and an image of a bride and groom on their wedding day. From the exterior, then, the entire structure appears to be an homage to the institution and ceremony of marriage while the interior reveals the spirit and soul, love and emotions experienced within a marriage.

A MOVING SEA
ARTIST STATEMENT

ARTISTIC INSPIRATION My initial inspiration for the content of this altered book/unique book/handmade box was the text that my cousin read at my sister's wedding; I Corinthians 13. Chapter 13 of I Corinthians is often read for weddings because it personifies love; sweetly simple and undyingly faithful. As plain as the sun, it's a mirror of God's love, a mirror reflecting the perfect love; so that we can aspire to it as humans, to love each other in this light, to bask in its glow. Coupled with the original Biblical text from I Corinthians are two additional interpretations of the verses (one belonging to my cousin, the other to me), expressing the idea that though we are fallible, we can still aspire to experience the long and lovely dance that is love.

While I was brainstorming ideas for what I wanted to specifically explore in this book structure, I was also reading *Committed; A Skeptic Makes Peace with Marriage* (Viking 2010), by Elizabeth Gilbert. I drew on many of Gilbert's thoughts and musings about the expectations that we have of marriage, the ability to love another unconditionally, and the practice of marriage itself for inspiration and interpretation in my work.

In terms of visual inspiration, I was especially moved by the book works of Alexander Korser-Robinson. Robinson takes books and turns them from utilitarian objects into purely visual works of art by hollowing out most of the text while leaving behind various images and words that form a new narrative to replace that which was removed. Robinson writes that he attempts to create an "inner landscape" in his work so that the viewer might engage his/her own personal experiences in order to assign meaning to the work. In this way, the book becomes more than just another way to learn about a specific issue, or the broader world, but additionally is a way through which one might gain insight about oneself. Through *A Moving Sea*, I attempted to achieve a similar result.

BIO *As an artist, I focus on telling the stories of people and places that are in grave danger of being lost or forgotten forever. History repeats itself far too often, and so by telling these stories I help others remember, learn from the past, and encourage them to take action for the collective good and for the sake of our present and future. By committing these stories to the collective memory and urging others to take direct action through their personal experience of, and relation to, the stories, I am able to effect positive social change in support of those issues about which I am passionate. I am a conservation and preservation artist. I am a conserver and preserver of stories about people and their places; young and old, small and large, quiet and loud, secret and well-known.*

I am specifically drawn to the artist's book format as a sculptural medium to convey these stories because it is tangible, experiential, and provides an interactive experience for the viewer. You cannot stand idly by and view my work hanging upon a wall; it requires you to turn pages, open drawers, lift panels, navigate word and image; it can draw you in and repel you; it demands discovery. In other words, my books create a liminal space, where liminal is defined as "of or relating to a sensory threshold, a state of betwixt and between." During this state of being, one's sense of identity dissolves to some extent, initiating a period of transition where normal limits to thought, self-understanding, and behavior are relaxed, thus leading to new perspectives. In this sense, the pieces I create are liminal spaces (either physical or psychological) that engage viewers in the betwixt and between space, thus enabling a transformative experience that results in the formation of unique perspectives on what has come before and what may come next.