



Printing and binding fabric books

Textiles are an important part of bookbinding, forming components of the bound structure and cover, but cotton, linen and silk are not common materials for the inner pages of a book. These materials offer a particular set of affordances and challenges in making books.

In this illustrated talk I will discuss the processes and implications of working with fabric pages, both to print on and to bind and the impact fabric pages has on a reader or viewer.

I will share my bookbinding and printing art practice and explore some of the joys and the technicalities of making books with fabric and textiles as the primary media. I will also demonstrate some of my printing techniques, including letterpress and printing with botanical matter, both as printing 'plates' but also when used as printing inks and dyes. My fabric pages are bound between supporting hard covers. I will share my chosen binding methods and demonstrate the layering effects unique to silk pages and the sturdiness of cotton and linen and how these pages change reading experience.

The talk will be followed by a hands-on Q&A where participants are encouraged to read and handle the books.

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Makyla Curtis is a printmaker, bookbinder and poet who enjoys printing with the versatility and flexibility of fabric. Her art practice works towards a connection with the landscape and an understanding of the history of Aotearoa. She holds a Master of Visual Arts from Auckland University of Technology and a Master of Arts in English from the University of Auckland. Her book 'a whole story in the eye of the sea' won the Supreme Award at Changing Threads, the National Textile and Fibre Arts Awards 2024.

Makyla also writes a Substack newsletter called Threefold's Substack in which she explores three different aspects of her work in each edition.