

Hui-Chu Ying of Myers School of Art came up with the idea for *Monumental Ideas in Miniature Books*.

Books

Miniature show fits in just one small box

Continued from Page E1

renewed interest in how things are made and a growing appreciation of things that are superbly made.

It also doesn't hurt that shows such as PBS's *Antiques Roadshow* have made the public increasingly aware of what it takes for an object to become collectible and how superb craftsmanship almost always has a hand in that.

It's with that in mind then that we consider *Monumental Ideas in Miniature Books*, on view at the University of Akron Emily Davis Gallery through Sept. 5.

The idea for the exhibit came from Hui-Chu Ying, professor of printmaking at the Myers School of Art. She thought about having a traveling show of miniature books, and while at the Southern Graphics Council in March, issued an invitation to everyone there and asked them to pass the word.

"I thought of doing something small because with big things, you have to think about the cost, and we're having an economic downturn right now, so in order to make it affordable, the weight had to be small so we could ship it to as many places as possible," Hui-Chu said.

"The invitation asked printmaking teachers at colleges and universities to make a handmade book in an edition of six, and give me five and I will travel those five all over.

"This is one set here at Emily Davis Gallery, and four other sets are traveling nationally and internationally," she added.

"Currently, they are traveling to 40 venues, so it worked out pretty good."

Thanks to Alicia Candiani, director of Pryecto'ace, Buenos Aires, Argentina, who is the international coordinator for the touring exhibit, Hui-Chu was persuaded that the show could also be sent to international venues.

"When the international artists submitted their books, I

asked them if they thought they could find a place to show them, and they said, 'Of course!'" Hui-Chu said. "It spread by word of mouth and through the Internet. I had 141 entries from 12 countries, and they are going to travel to 10 countries.

"The entire show fits in one little box, and weighs only one pound," she added. "To ship it by UPS is only \$50. So for that little fee you can have a show."

Each artist paid a \$30 entry fee, and for that, they received an exhibit catalog, put together by students and faculty at the Myers School of Art. The catalog, after its initial run for the artists, is printed on demand for each person who orders one.

The variety of the handmade books is seemingly endless, but the common denominator is superb craftsmanship.

"Some did a collaboration, some did printing, some did writing, some did a combination," Hui-Chu said.

And every single one of them is both beautifully made and fascinating to behold.

Leticia Bajuyo of Hanover, Ind., created *A Wonderful Toy*, a book consisting of wooden covers that open up to reveal a bright pink Slinky, onto which she has written an essay.

Christopher Hoot, associate professor at the Myers School of Art, created a bunny book with various adorable rabbit images folded between faux-fur covers.

Michael Loderstedt, associate professor at the Kent State University School of Art, created an exquisite screen-printed folded book, *Bird Song*, whose covers are isosceles trapezoids, which means that in order to fold the pages to fit neatly between the covers, the pages had to be cut on a curve.

Neermala Luckeenarain, an artist from Mauritius, off the coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean, somehow heard about the show and sent in a beautiful folded book called *Multicultural Society*. It has a handmade embossed cover containing folded pages of black, white, blue, yellow and red filled with wonderful relief prints.

Iman Mahmud of Munich, Germany, entered an impressive book dedicated to Herman Hesse's 1922 novel *Siddhartha*. Abstracts from the novel are overwritten with calligraphy, and some of the pages are structured

Details

Show: *Monumental Ideas in Miniature Books*.

When: Through Sept. 5. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, until 9 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. Closed Sunday.

Where: Emily Davis Gallery, University of Akron Myers School of Art, 150 E. Exchange St., Akron.

Information: 330-972-5950 or <http://art.uakron.edu/galleries/>.

with gypsum. Her Web site (<http://www.iman-mahmud.de/english/index.htm>) contains examples of her work in books, calligraphy and paintings.

Some artists made pop-up books, others made books whose pages open up to create three-dimensional shapes, still others made books from unconventional materials, such as wax or hair product packaging. One artist created pages of hand-quilted bridal veil material into which she inserted tiny objects.

This is an entrancing exhibit, the only drawback being that visitors can't handle the books, because some of them are too fragile.

But to make up for that, Gallery Director Rod Bengston and his assistants have made a video showing the books being opened and explored by a trained conservator, so that visitors can see all their wonderful mysteries and revelations.

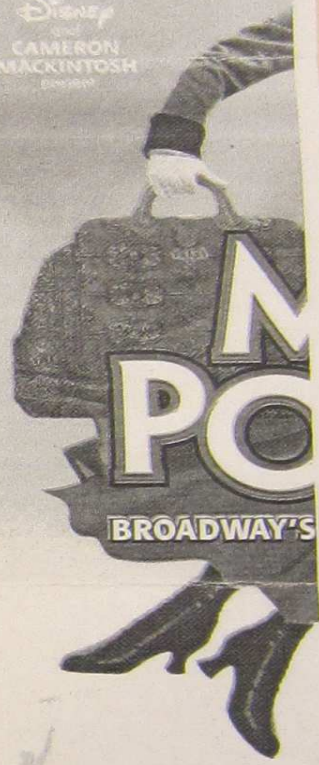
All in all, a great effort by Hui-Chu and the artists who submitted books, an innovative approach to organizing an exhibit and circulating it for wider appreciation, and a wonderful way to while away an hour or two taking in these small marvels.

The exhibit also can be seen online at the gallery's Web site (<http://art.uakron.edu/exhibitions/mimb-monumental-ideas-in-miniature-books/>) which has a link to the catalog's Web site (<http://mimb.org/>). The original exhibit at Columbia College in Chicago is also online at Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mimb-borg/>).

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