**Faculty Development Grant Report - Preliminary**

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**Funded Project:** The loss of a beloved 400-year old Valley oak tree and the search for survivors in the neighborhoods and wild lands of my community are the subject of my new book project, *Giant: a deity with leaves* and its companion volume *Giants in the cul-de-sac*. It follows a thematic continuum explored in two of my recent editions, *Where Stucco Meets Chaparral* and *At Low Water*.

*Where Stucco meets Chaparral*, 2015, is a printed herbarium of local California native plants with stories of local and natural history and personal observation gathered during many years of daily walks. Detailed images of seven indigenous plants are letterpress printed in multiple colors in tight registration through their seasonal life cycles that contrast hand-carved representations of the environmental context where they prevail.

*At Low Water*, 2017, looks back to the beginnings of my passion for exploration and observation of native species to a time when I collected sea animals gathered at low tide to bring home and live in an aquarium in my girlhood bedroom. The main text recalls the story of filling the tank with sea creatures and the life-and-death drama that took place among the captive inhabitants. A poem, told from the viewpoint of the child in the moment of discovery, runs through the book on translucent leaves that overlay images of the intertidal habitat. Field notes contain data from the year spent in the tide pools of Southern California researching and collecting images for the fourteen detailed plates of marine specimens and twelve habitat images found throughout the book.

Like all my editions, the *Giant: a deity with leaves* and *Giants in the cul-de-sac* set will be entirely letterpress printed using handset metal and wood type and photopolymer plates. Each signature contains a folio of botanical contact prints where leaves of native trees are layered on paper, bundled and immersed in a dyebath of black walnut hulls and iron water. Cotton Zerkall Book Wove paper has the excellent printing capability required for type and the detailed images of leaves and acorns. The Hanji paper in colors reminiscent of the woodland offer contrast. The translucent Kitakata paper center spread adds dimension and depth to woodland images.

The binding will be longstitched sewn with waxed hand-dyed linen thread through a spine of quarter-sawn oak with a cover of botanical printed Indigo handmade watercolor paper.

The 64-page edition of *Giant: a deity with leaves* and the 32-page companion volume *Giants in the cul-de-sac* will be 50 copies at 7.5 x 11 x 1 inches.
Botanical contact printing of the cover

Botanical contact printing is a process for transferring color from plant material onto paper using heat from a simmering dye bath. There are various methods for obtaining beautiful contact prints but I use a method of creating bundles of paper wrapped around pipes to immerse into the hot liquid.

Australian natural dyer, India Flint, first used the term Eco-printing for her process of ecologically sustainable dye processes on textiles with plants. I learned this process from mixed media artist Leslie Marsh.

Results vary depending on the quality of the local water, type of plant material and type of paper used. I use an electric turkey roaster in my studio and have learned to duplicate my results fairly reliably by trial and error.

The roaster is filled with plain water combined with natural walnut hulls, iron sulfate and vinegar. The resulting dyebath is brought to a simmer over heat.

Handmade watercolor paper is soaked or dipped in a solution of alum. This mordant helps draw the dye out of the plant material and affix to the paper.

The plant material is soaked in water, plain or with vinegar or iron water added.

Next the paper is laid out on a flat surface and covered with leaves. The paper is rolled tightly around a length of pipe. Wind the string around the length of the paper and tie the bundle securely with string.

The bundles are placed in the simmering dye bath for two hours.

Once the bundles have been removed from the roaster and allowed to cool they can be unwrapped and rinsed. The damp printed paper is air dried and pressed.

The spent leaves can be composted or discarded.

Dry leaves are collected in late fall.

The leaves are soaked in a solution of distilled vinegar and water.

The bundles are immersed in the dyebath and cooked for several hours.

The leaves are laid out on the alum soaked watercolor paper, wrapped around pipes and tied.

Once cool, the bundles are unwrapped and the spent leaves discarded. The paper is hung to dry and then press flat in a book press.
A similar process was used to print the botanical pages for the book but instead of rolled the pages were covered with leaves and stacked between thick glass and tied. The bundles was immersed in the same dyebath in a large restaurant pan and cooked on the stove.

Sheets of Strathmore Aquarius II 90 lb. watercolor paper is soaked overnight in an alum solution.

The leaves are laid out on the damp paper.

The stack is immersed and cooked for 2 hours.

The stack is cooled and the leaves discarded.

The paper is rinsed and deacidified in an ammonia solution.

Twenty-five sheets are stacked between glass and tied with twine.
The printing of the book begins with the cover. The dry and press botanical contact printed Indigo handmade watercolor paper is printed with large Clarendon extra condensed wood type purchase on ebay for the project and Arrighi handset metal type.

The binding is longstitched sewn with waxed hand-dyed linen thread through a spine of quarter-sawn oak.