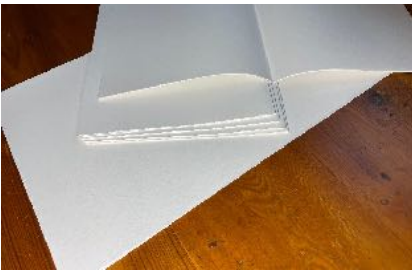




basic bookbinding tools, including cradles for punching sewing holes, a book press and a finishing or laying in press all made here in the shop



full sheets are folded and nested into signatures



holes are punched with an awl through the 4 pages of each signature using a spacing template



punched signatures ready for sewing



kettle stitching the signatures

Journals consist of a book block, which is the body of pages, and a cover for protection and stiffening. Most quality book blocks use groups of 4 pages folded in half and nested as *signatures*. The signatures are sewn together at the spine and to each other. The block is glued together at the spine, then end pages are added. The finished block is reinforced with a narrow cloth or paper *mull*. It is then fitted into the cover structure and attached by gluing the outside surface of the end pages to the inside faces of the covers.

This traditional process is the best one for durability and flexibility, allowing the journal to open completely and lie flat. Making beautiful book objects by hand is wonderful, but clearly not for economy. There are tools to scale up the process for manufacture, but at the loss of craft. A process known as “perfect binding” is used to avoid sewing by relying more on the adhesive. I will describe a way to make that easier process stronger and more useful for us in another edition of notes.

The journal is a gathering and germinating place for ideas, but I have come to want journals to be more like specific investigations, each following its thread of ideas. In the metaphor of a museum, rather than the journal being the whole collection of exhibits, it is more like one of the rooms, gathering only the things that relate or develop that thread. By making my own journals, I can scale them as I need, choose paper I want for specific purposes, my own handmade paper for instance, and feel connected to the object from the beginning.

YouTube videos are great to learn the process, but it is easy to get confused by the complexity of different approaches. If you are interested, start with Sea Lemon’s tutorials on [text block](#), [kettle stitch sewing](#) and [cover construction](#) for basic journal structure. She has videos about perfect binding as well. You might also look at the videos from DAS bookbinding, Peter Baumgartner, and Kristi Warren, which are all good, although I’ve hardly scratched the surface of what’s available. All the more proprietary tools can be substituted by simple ones and materials are widely available.



the finished book block with signatures sewn and glued on the spine, end pages attached and a narrow wrapper added for strengthening



the two major parts: the book block and a cover made of boards, spine and here a narrow book cloth strip rather than the usual complete cloth wrapping



a journal with regular office or art supply paper, two others with some of my own paper, kozo and flax



some of the 50 or so journals thus far