May 16, 2020 | Book Making with Sonia

BRIC teaching artist Sonia Kim demonstrates two options for handmade books, including how to make string from plastic shopping bags.

YOU’LL NEED:

- Scissors
- Paper
- String
- Cereal box for hard cover (optional)
- Glue (optional)
- Plastic shopping bag (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1-Sheet Book: Fold your paper in half the long way (hot dog style), and then open and fold the short way (hamburger style). Make sure you are matching up the corners as you fold. Lift the open side of the paper, and fold into the middle. Flip your sheet over and do the same with the other side. You’ll know you did it right if your paper makes a W or M shape. Open your paper all the way up, and fold again the short way. Using your scissors, cut starting at the folded side (not the open side). Stop cutting halfway through, at the point where you see the next fold. Open your paper back up again, and then fold the long way. The part that you cut will make an opening in the middle. Pinch the two sides and push toward the middle so that all the parts come together to make an X. Fold over to finish your book.

3-Hole Book: Choose the size you want and cut or carefully tear your paper so that all the pieces are the same size. Fold all your pages in half and make three holes along the fold, either with a hold puncher or by cutting small triangles or half circles along the fold. Be sure that your holes go through all the sheets of paper. You can make an aglet for your string by wrapping the end with tape or a sticker, so that it will be similar to the end of a shoelace. This will make it easier for you to sew, but you can sew without it. On the outside of your book, push the string through the middle hole into the middle of your book. Move the thread through one of the other two holes and push through back out to the outside of your book. Keep some string (a “tail”) at either end. Now, move the string through the third hole (the one that’s still empty), back into the middle of the book. Next, push the string back through the middle hole to the outside of the book. Tie your two ends of the string together and cut off any excess string if you want.
Making a Hardcover: Cut one of the large sides of a cereal box so that you have a flat piece at least as big as the paper you want to use as your cover. You can use a blank sheet of paper or something else like another drawing you made. Cover with glue, and then press your paper to the cereal box sheet, with the side of the paper you want to see facing up. If your paper is bigger than the cereal box sheet, you can trim with scissors. Once the glue is dry, fold it in half. You can place your pages inside of the cover, and then make three holes and sew following the steps for the 3-hole book.

Making String from Plastic Bags:

Lay your bag flat and cut off the bottom seam. Next, cut off the handle portion from the top. Flatten out what’s left of the bag, and then cut strips (one inch to an inch and a half) across the bag, stopping about a half an inch from the end. Continue cutting strips until you have made strips across the whole bag. Open the bag up so that you can see the part that hasn’t been cut. Lay this part flat. Starting at one end, cut diagonally across from one strip to the next. Continue through until you have cut through the whole section. When you get to the end, cut the last piece on a diagonal. You should now have one long continuous piece of plastic string. You can use this string for sewing up your book.