

Be Creative at Home

Basic Instant Book

These are very, very easy, once you get the hang of them. Their three spreads, or six pages, plus front and back cover, will not intimidate even the shyest author or artist. One-sided, they can be published in a minute or two by pressing the button on a photocopier. Yet I find myself going back to them—at Purgatory Pie Press, we have even begun making a limited-edition collaborative series subscription called InstaBooks.

First make one, just to get the feel of it, from anything you have lying around that can be recycled, such as a piece of computer paper printed on one side or a yellow flier that someone hands you on the street.

- 1 Fold the paper lengthwise, and open. Burnish with a bone folder each time you fold. {A}
- 2 Fold the paper horizontally. {B}
- 3 Fold the two open ends up to the middle, front and back. Then open those folds. {C}
- 4 Tear or slit along center from middle to fold, as shown. {D}
- 5 Grasping both sides of middle from slit, pull apart and down. {E}
- 6 Fold into a book form. {F}

You will notice that your book's pages don't line up perfectly. The reason is paper thickness. The thickness of a piece of regular 8½ x 11" (21.5 x 28cm) printer paper seems almost nonexistent. But think about how thick a ream of that printer paper is, or a novel—or a phone book or a dictionary. Paper thickness adds up, even in this very simple book.

You cannot trim this book, because it will fall apart, though you can round the corners. If you want it to be even on the edges (often I don't care if it is), you need to make an allowance for the paper thickness. Do this on the second fold, the first horizontal fold. Do not fold it exactly in half; instead leave about ¼" (6mm). If you are using thicker paper, allow a little more space. I always experiment with the paper first, before I start a real piece of art.

YOU WILL NEED

One 8½ x 11" (21.5 x 28cm) sheet of lightweight paper
Scissors
Bone folder

Before you begin, understand that this simple book is what it is. You will learn to make other books in later chapters that may be more satisfying, but none will be more instant. Enjoy this instantness, and see what you can do with it. If you publish an instant zine, send me a copy to add to all the ones my students have made over the years.

