Syracuse University

From the SelectedWorks of Peter D. Verheyen

October 8, 2021

Fish Skin Binding: [Re]introducing this distinctive material for unique bindings

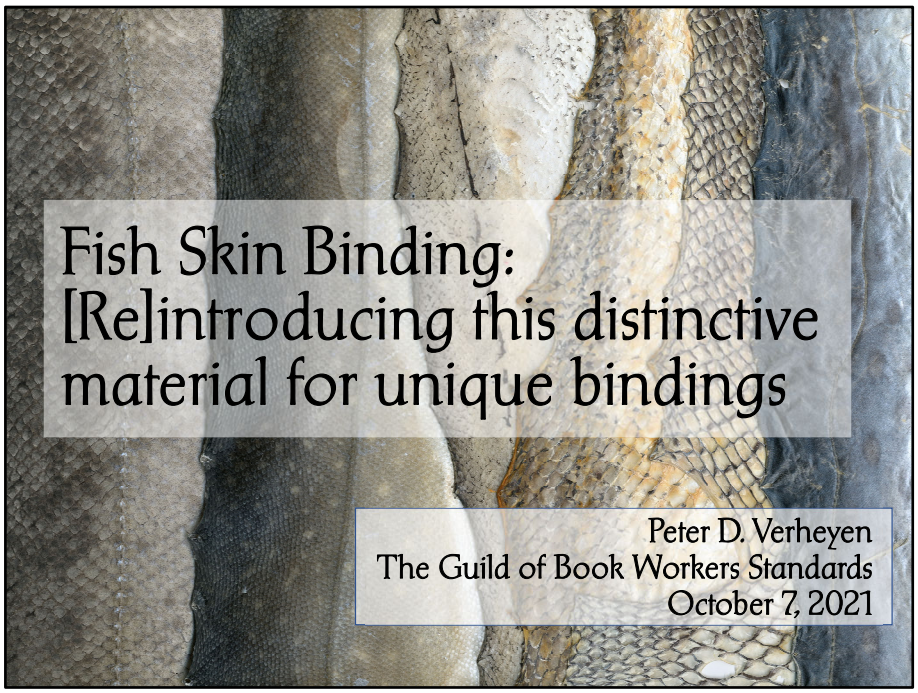
Peter D Verheyen



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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/peter_verheyen/62/


Fish Skin Binding:
[Re]introducing this distinctive material for unique bindings
Peter D. Verheyen
The Guild of Book Workers Standards
October 7, 2021

Wild/Life!



Trout parchment by Kyle A. Clark (left) and Atlantic salmon parchment by Karen Hanmer (above)

How did we get here?

Two beautiful bindings in fish parchment.

How did it start?


Nr. 15 Allgemeiner Anzeiger für Buchbindereien 13. April 1934 Seite 177


Bucheinbände aus Fischhaut (1934) by Ernst Collin (left) and Fips and his eels (1937)

Fish skin preserved and used in many cultures.

Resurgent in indigenous cultures, fashion, and more.

I had used commercial skins occasionally on bindings.

Finding increasing sources as part of my Ernst Collin *Bone Folder* project.

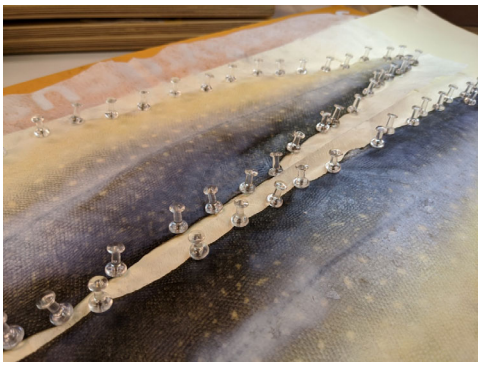
First mentioned as material in Zeidler (1708), then by Martini in 1916 with materials tests…

Austerity measure in WW I and post-war Germany, later means to reduce dependence on foreign sources…

Fish may have usefulness for objets d'art (Galanteriearbeiten), but said that bookbinders might try their hand at making it once or twice before returning to their favorite [real] leathers. From *Das Falzbein*, 1960.

Playing with my food





Playing with my food. Salmon at left. Arctic char above.
When dry, the parchment will we be highly translucent..

Most articles described making parchment.

My favorite material.

Reached out to Jesse Meyer/Pergamena who offered some suggestions, but had no experience. Still, very useful.

How hard could it be? If “Fips” could, I can.

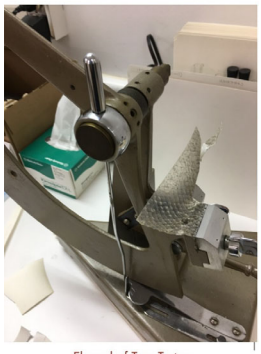
Testing

Salmon Parchment Fold Test



MIT Folding Endurance Tester
At University of Iowa Center for the Book
Research and Production Paper Facility

Salmon Parchment Tear Test



Elmendorf Tear Tester
At University of Iowa Center for the Book
Research and Production Paper Facility

Thank YOU Tim!

Material	Test	Tests	Final Averages
Fish Parchment	Fold	2	79,338 folds
	Tear	3, Dis-qualified	NA (Did not tear across full width due to strength)
Goat Parchment	Fold	2	12,015 folds
	Tear	6	784 gr/cm
UICB Flax Papercase Paper, circa 1992	Fold	60	4501 folds[1]
	Tear	60	828 gr/cm[2]

Tests conducted by Timothy Barrett, Thank YOU.

Duplicated as best as possible given nomenclature and unknowns of original 1916 tests made on Franz Martini's skins.

Incredible strength!

https://pressbengel.blogspot.com/2019/10/some-shorts-of-testing-process-on-my.html

Populating my "aquarium"



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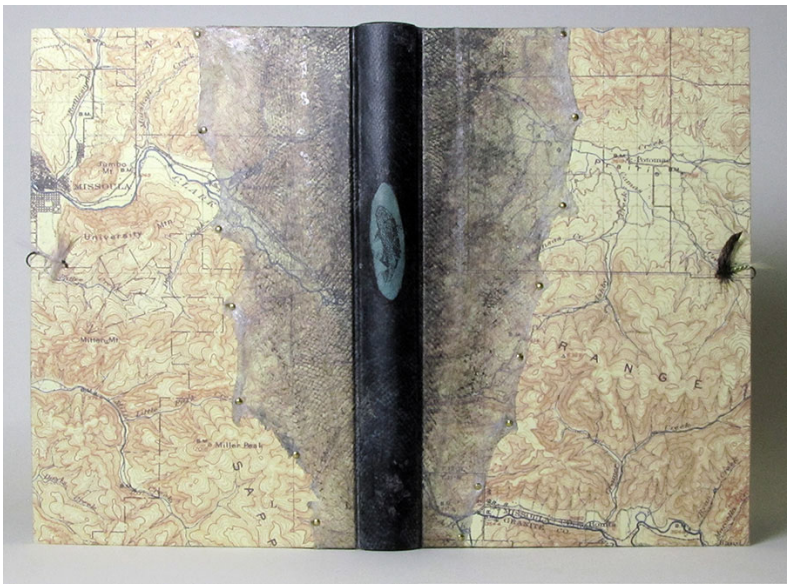
Thank you Erin Fletcher

From left: Atlantic salmon, Arctic char, haddock, lane snapper, sea bass, mackerel



The Bone Folder, 2018

Atlantic salmon with paste paper



A River Runs Through It, 2020

Quarter rainbow trout over USGS map

Material and process as metaphor (Minsky)



Old Man and the Sea, 2020

Mackerel, shark, wood with goat parchment



Latest binding
Life-history and habits of the salmon, sea-trout, trout, and ..., 2021

Text from 1910

Mix of green tea tanned steelhead, and walleye and char parchment, with salmon details

Material and process as metaphor



Fish skin in binding never really took off.

"Try it and move on".

Shared on my blog and in two journal articles.

COVID project and a Bind-O-Rama challenge.

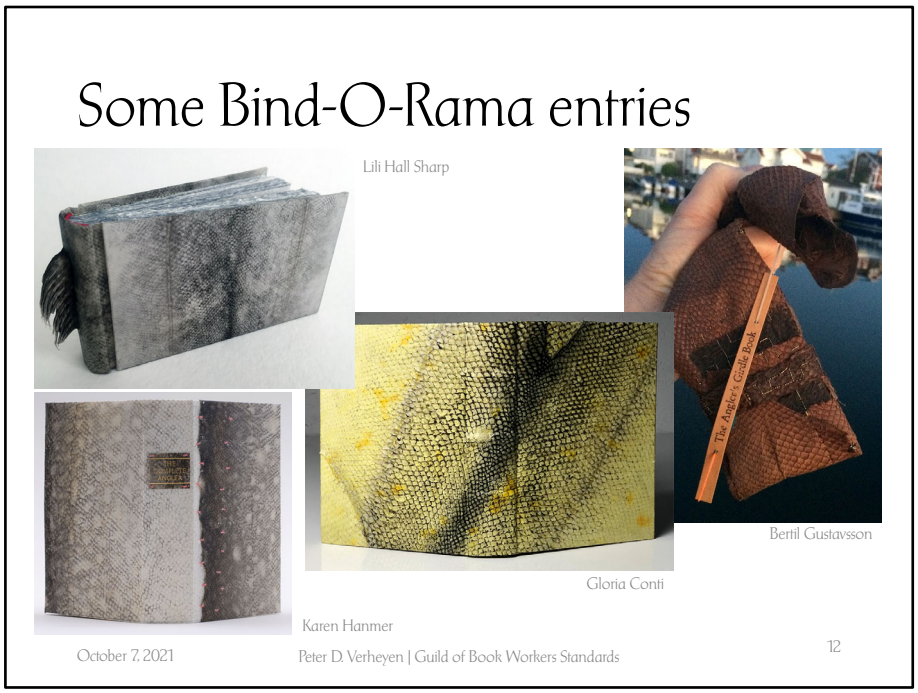
Despite sharing for a few years, was "put up" to demonstrate via a webinar.

21 participants spread from Sweden to Australia, no Germans, 3 added after, will continue to add.

https://www.philobiblon.com/bindorama20

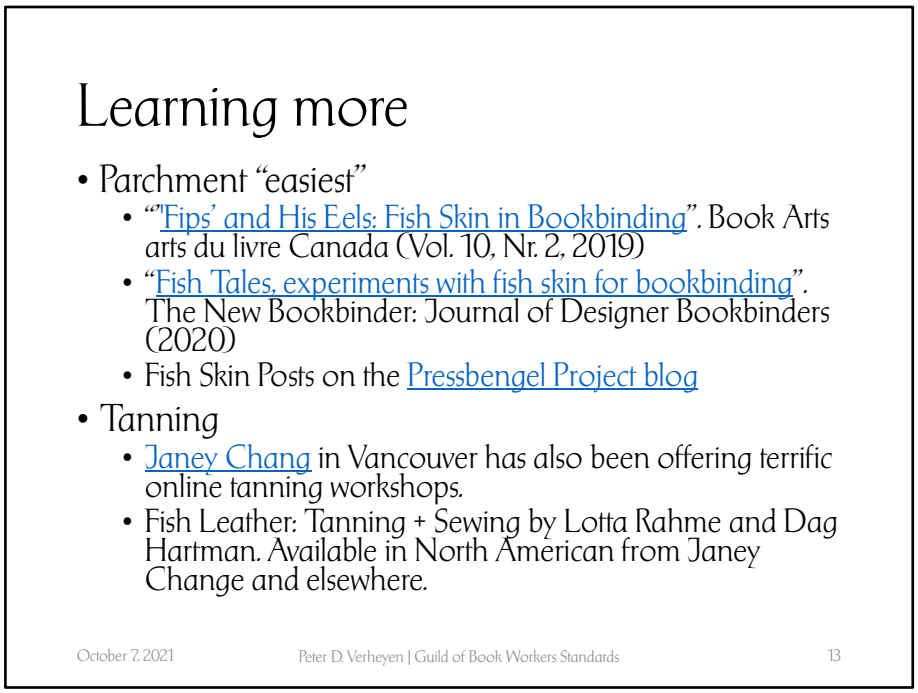
Others teaching workshops on making parchment and/or tanning.

2 in GBW *Wild/Life* exhibit; Karen Hanmer and Kyle Clark.



From top left (clockwise)

Lili Hall, Bertil Gustavsson, Gloria Conti, Karen Hanmer



https://www.philobiblon.com/bindorama20

Others teaching workshops on making parchment and/or tanning.

Articles:
"Fips" and His Eels: Fish Skin in Bookbinding
https://works.bepress.com/peter_verheyen/52/

Fish Tales, experiments with fish skin for bookbinding
https://works.bepress.com/peter_verheyen/59/

Fish skin posts on the Pressbengel Project blog
https://pressbengel.blogspot.com/search/label/fish%20leather

So, be like 'Fips'



Make parchment or tan, bind, and share in exhibits, the Bind-O-Rama, and elsewhere. Once you try, you'll be hooked!

For more information, verheyen@philobiblon.com

https://www.philobiblon.com/bindorama20