

ecosystem health.

If we want something different in addition to our beloved pine forests of our environs, we need to plan for it with Mother Nature's support.

Starting seeds indoors for a head start

I started seedlings in compostable clamshell containers that my muffins come in. It works great: add seedling mix, seeds, water, close the lid and in two weeks I had 5-inch sprouts. I made a mistake: I used compost. I had two seedlings out of 12 seeds planted. Two

areas turned moldy; two were fine. I don't know what caused the mold, but a seedling mix would have worked better.

Here's the better way for our area:

1. Start seeds with a seed-starting mix that has what you need for that purpose: coconut coir, peat moss, perlite, etc. for even moisture and some basic nutrients to get the seeds started. Loose, fluffy textures let the seeds emerge without clumps. The delicate sprouts need to stretch both up and down into the mix.

2. Pot up (transplant) at 2-3 inches high to a bigger container of potting soil (it's heavier, looser for airflow, and has more nutrients to support the baby plant). People use fancy pots, plant trays, or just rip holes in the soil bag for this stage of transplanting. Beware of tangled roots and gently separate the plants so they have their own space to grow. If they are too tangled, choose the stronger one to transplant. I usually try to save both—sometimes I can save most of them.

3. Then wait for the outdoor weather to be warm enough to support the plants, usually by Memorial Day weekend. Many plants will be fine in larger pots, especially the fabric grow bags. Place outdoors after all danger of frost (Ask the weather forecasters!) right in the grow bags or in your prepared garden bed.

Janet Sellers, an avid "lazy gardener," lets Mother Nature lead the way with Colorado high desert forest gardening. Contact her: JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Contemporary art prints and artist handmade books



By Janet Sellers

What is contemporary art?

Contemporary art is art made by living artists and encompasses a wide range of materials from the precious to everyday objects or materials, and includes electronic media and ephemera (typically, written, or printed items of collectible memorabilia).

The aesthetic value resides in the intention or purpose of the artwork instead of mere materials. Artists sell prints of their work from their own paintings, photography and their artist book images printed on a variety of materials including paper, cloth, wood, natural and synthetic as well as recycled materials. Mass production of the artists' works are often made in posters and in mass-produced books by museums and publishing houses.

What is an artist book?

Around 1783, William Blake's first collection of poems, *Poetical Sketches*, was printed. As artist, poet, and printmaker, he may be the forerunner of artist books, making his own books with words and images, and predecessor to the artist books of the 1960s. Art-

ist books since the 1950s are considered an independent, unconventional art medium, an appealing alternative space for art.

The Smithsonian Library explains, "... In the United States, Ed Ruscha produced some of the first artist books consisting of compilations of photographs with a title on the front cover and little narrative quality. Other artists used the book format to create narratives to deal with difficult or emotional issues, and some used it as a cheap, portable way to make the artwork available to a broader public than the gallery and museum world allowed.... Books are meant to be touched, and their pages turned, but an art object is usually only experienced under glass in a museum. These are issues that affect the work of artists, practitioners of book arts, curators, museum collections staff, librarians, publishers, and others. Yet the problems of the ambivalent nature of the artist's book is part of what gives it such interesting potential ..."

What are artist books and artist book print editions?

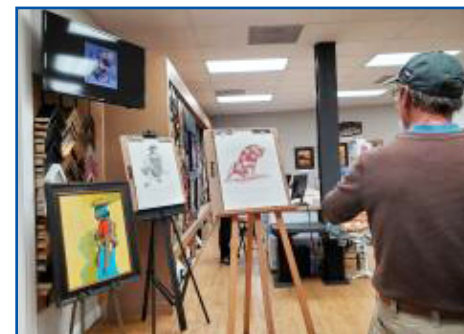
An artist book, *Livre d'artiste*, is art in

book form. We might call it imagination that we can hold in our hands. The artist book creator has complete control over the creation, materials, content, and all aspects of the intention of the artwork. An artist book can be made of rare or common materials at hand for the artists' creation, including up-cycled paper or common printer paper. The latter is often used for artist books and repurposed books. The materials used are purposely chosen by the artist.

Artist books and prints represent powerful, personal aesthetic forces for communication. And unlike mass-produced books, artist books are intended for a smaller circulation of less than 1,000-5,000, often with smaller signed and numbered circulations of 1-100 for handmade prints, books or 'zines. Artist books and prints are small scale and cost effective, using simple production processes. They are valued for their uniqueness and limited numbers and are collected by many, including the archives of museums, universities, and libraries worldwide.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and speaker. Her paintings, sculptures, and

print artworks are exhibited coast to coast and locally in Colorado. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.



Above: Downtown Monument venues hosted the annual *No Boys Allowed Tour* on April 20, with 250 tickets sold. Women patrons enjoyed special snacks and sales, and collected a free gift from every location, including Bella Art and Frame Gallery, shown here with artist Mark Dixon drawing people during the event. Downtown Monument Art Hop season starts May 18, 5-8 pm., showcasing local contemporary art and artists. Visitors enjoy and buy art while surrounded by live music, food, and fun. *Photo courtesy of Maggie Williamson.*

Snapshots of Our Community

Donations to Literacy Center



Left: The Palmer Ridge Key Club (PRKC) and Monument Hill Kiwanis Club (MHKC) donated more than 300 books and \$650 for Tri-Lakes Children's Literacy Center (CLC) on March 20. The money was raised during sponsorship nights at Arlene's Beans in Monument and Mod Pizza

in Colorado Springs. The Lewis-Palmer Middle School Builders Club (LPMSBC) and PRKC made another donation of more than 100 books to CLC. Many young children end up reading below their age level because they have no books of their own at home. CLC works with families and the community to provide an effective literacy program for struggling readers in grades 1-3. Each student gets personalized one-on-one tutoring. To donate or become a tutor, contact Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator Rachel Morin at 610-246-1047. In the photo, Morin thanks PRKC President Todd Osborn and Elliot Beagley of Lewis-Palmer Middle School Bear Creek for their contributions. *Photo by Dean Snow.*

Emergency Preparedness



Right: Students at Palmer Ridge High School helped organize an Emergency Preparedness Symposium on April 8. Several organizations that deal with emergencies like wildfires and disasters that might call for evacuation or "shelter in place" described the parameters for deciding proper responses. Christopher Gonzales, commander of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, has responded to many types of emergencies in our county. He described how decisions are made about addressing various emergencies, including traffic flow, first responder access, reverse 911 calls, and more. He suggested all county residents sign up for the reverse 911 service by logging into "Peak Alerts" at <https://www.elpasoteller911.org/246/PeakAlerts>. A presentation by Lisa Hatfield and André Mouton of the Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group (EPG) described how the group has helped Tri-Lakes residents "harden" their homes against wildfires. The process includes removing flammable materials from within 5 feet of your home, eliminating "laddering" vegetation, e.g., tall grass to Gambel oak to pines, preventing an ember storm from entering through vents in the eaves of your home, and other preventive measures. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

TLWC named Non-Profit of the Year

Right: Tri-Lakes Women's Club (TLWC) has been named Non-Profit of the Year by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce. TLWC was honored by the chamber at its annual awards dinner on April 14. TLWC earned the honor for its accomplishments and contributions to the Tri-Lakes community. Accepting the award were members Charlie Ann Hayes, left, and Ann Cook. *Photo courtesy of Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce.*



Cotton wins PLAG scholarship

Right: Each year, the Palmer Lake Art Group awards Art Scholarships to District 38 graduating seniors who have demonstrated serious commitment to art, intend to continue art studies, and plan for a profession with the visual arts. Isabelle Cotton, graduating senior at Palmer Ridge High School, was awarded the 2023 art scholarship of \$2,500. Isabelle will attend Temple University, Japan Campus in the fall. *Photo provided by the Palmer Lake Arts Group.*

