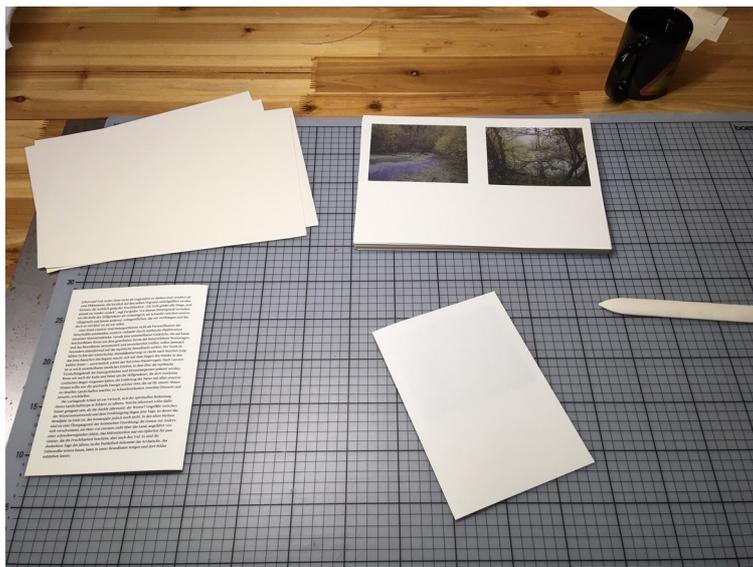
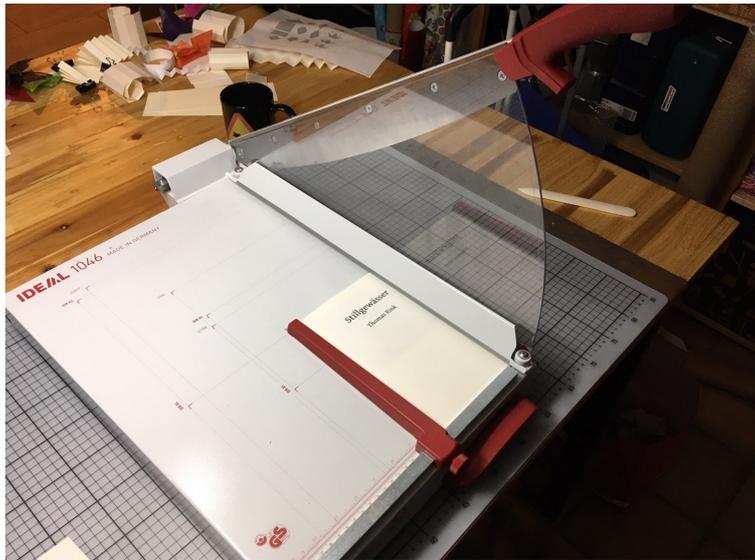


The pages for the book are printed on DIN A4 spreads on Munken Print Cream 150g/m² paper on my Epson 3880 printer. After about 20 minutes drying on air, the pages are pressed for 24h between sheets of blotting paper. This is required to prevent buckling and warping – otherwise, it wouldn't be possible to print on the backside.



Before binding, the spreads have to be folded along the short axis to provide folds of DIN A5 (half DIN A4) size. In folding, it is very important to align the edges carefully. Otherwise, the book will be crooked! The folds are then flattened using a bone folder. Especially with heavier papers, folding can be problematic as the paper can break along the folds. In this case, the paper has to be grooved before folding. This is one of the reasons why the so-called fine art papers are not well suited for book making. Munken Print Cream, however, folds well.

The folds are sewn in twos, one inside another (quarto, so eight pages at once). The consequence is that the edge of the inner fold sticks out from the outer fold by about 0.5 mm. This doesn't sound much but impedes leafing. For this reason, the outer edge has to be trimmed – the next step. It is important to use a high-quality stack cutter, cheap roll cutters won't work well.



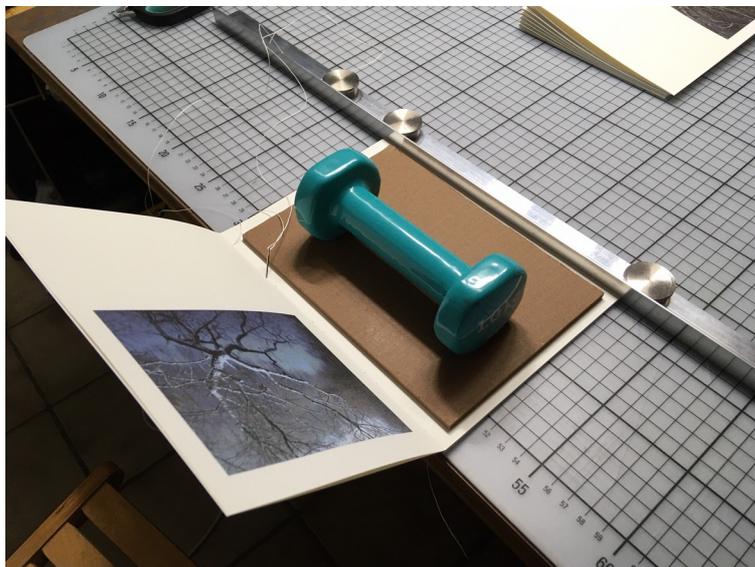
After this is done, holes for sewing have to be pierced. I made myself a cardboard stencil in order to achieve a proper alignment of the holes. Piercing is done with a pricker.





It is important to pierce the holes from the inside to the outside. Otherwise, glue might find its way into the book, damaging it!

Then, we can proceed to sewing. I use french chain stitching with 25/3 thread for this book. Side note: Some recommend sewing on cotton ribbons for greater stability. I tried this, too, but didn't find any significant difference for a book of the given paper and size. The disadvantage of ribbons is that the spine can't be glued at the ribbons. Sewing is easier if the folds are made stay put using a weight. A dumbbell works well for this purpose.





Finally, all folds are sewn:



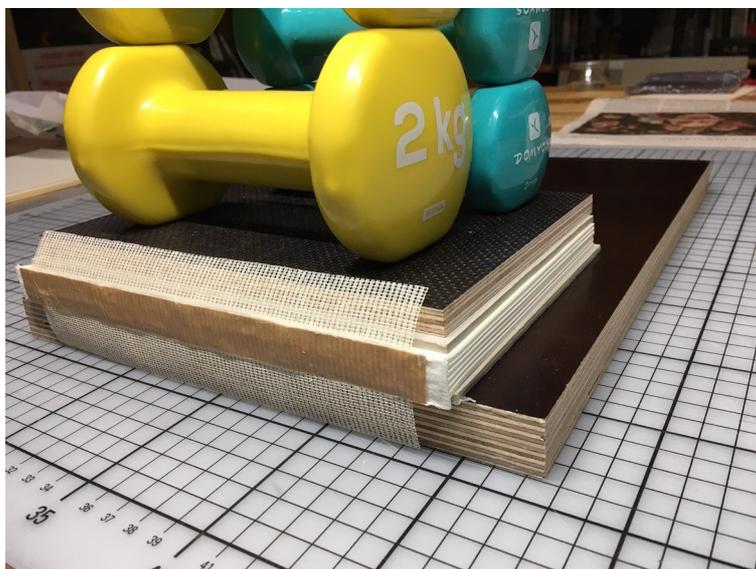
The book block is now compressed using a piece of wood and a couple of dumbbells (total weight 6 kg). I use the pricker to pull gently at the threads in order to tighten them a bit more. Then, a generous amount of glue is applied to the spine (I use Planatol BB / Planatol Elasta 1:1 for my bookmaking). Take care to squeeze the glue into the grooves between the folds. I use a crotcheting needle and my thumb for this.

Let it sit and dry for about 30 minutes. Then, cut two DIN A4 sized pieces of endpaper, fold them on the short axis and trim them to the same size as the page folds. Endpaper is a strong paper which is used to attach the book block to the cover. I use VE250. One half of the endpaper is later glued to the cover, and since it is going to elongate due to the water in the glue, I shorten this half by about 1 mm. On the other half of the endpaper – the half which is not going to be glued to the cover – apply glue to a strip along the folded edge, about 4 mm wide. This serves to attach one fold of endpaper to the first and to the last page of the block, respectively.



Above: The block with glued spine.

Now, I glue headbands to the sides of the spine. After that, the spine has to be reinforced further using gauze and brown wrapping paper, again using generous amounts of glue. A 19x6 cm strip of gauze comes first. In addition to strengthening the spine, it also supports the endpapers in holding the cover. I use my thumb to work the glue into the gauze, to get rid of air bubbles. Finally, a strip of packing paper is glued over the gauze. Have a look below:



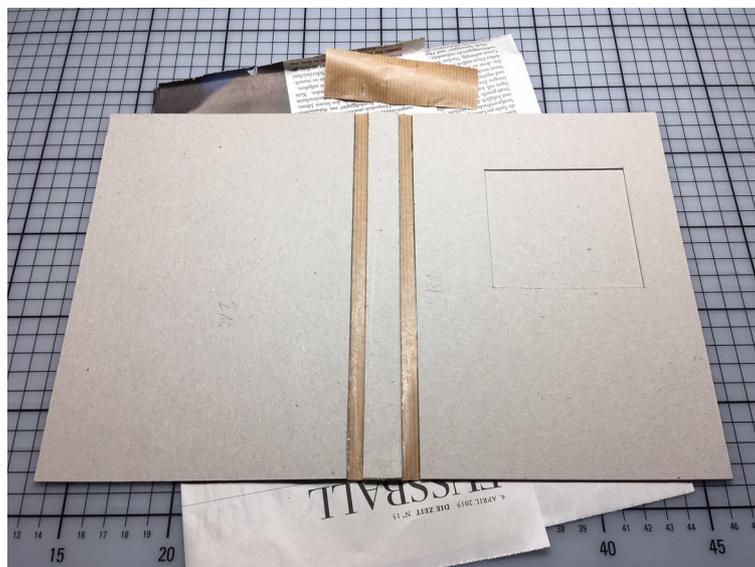
Let it sit pressed (6 kg) over night to dry.

Next, the book cover has to be built. This is going to be a half-clothbound hardcover, front and back covered with blue Hahnemühle Bugra deckle-edge paper. The front cover has an embossed rectangle into which the title will be glued. The cardboard for the cover is 2 mm in thickness.



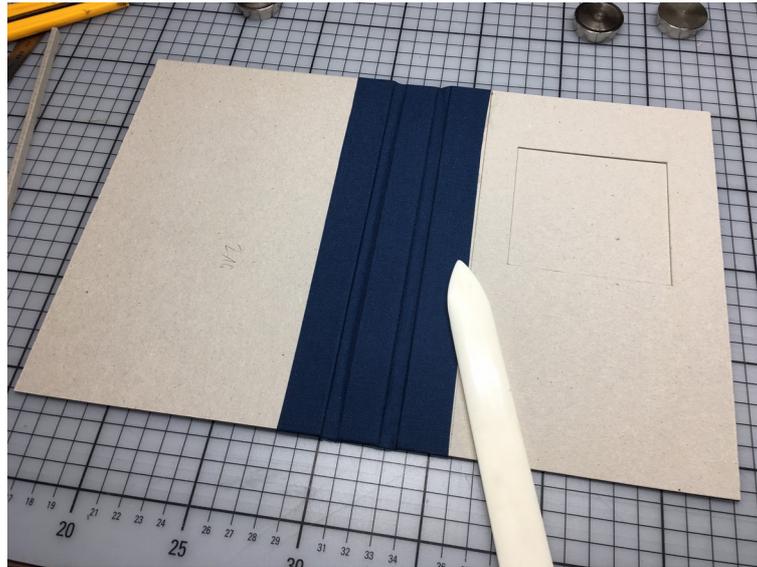
To make the embossed rectangle, I glue two pieces of 1 mm thick cardboard back-to-back to each other. Into one of them, I cut the rectangle for the embossing. On the picture, you can see the cut pieces for back cover, spine and two for the front cover. I assemble the front cover with double-sided adhesive tape instead of glue since warping after drying proved to be a problem which I couldn't solve.

The cut cardboard components are then glued to a strip of brown packing paper, spine in the middle, back- and front cover to the left and the right side, respectively. I leave a gap of 8 mm between the spine and the covers – this will be the hinge for the cover. When building the cover, it is important to work with a precision better than 0.5 mm and keep everything at right angles, otherwise, the book will be crooked! Let it sit for about 30 minutes to dry.



The next step is to cover the spine with cloth. The cloth should be 4 cm longer than the height of the cover, and about 8 cm wide. Apply glue to the back of the cloth, place it centered on the strip for the spine and rub it down – only on the spine! – with the bone folder. Important: Never rub on the cloth directly, since it will leave glossy marks which can't be fixed! Always put some parchment paper over the cloth when rubbing. After the spine area has been glued, tightly press the cloth into the hinges using the bone folder. This should result in two grooves left and right, each 8 mm in width.

Finally, rub down the cloth on the covers. Again, take care that everything remains at right angles!

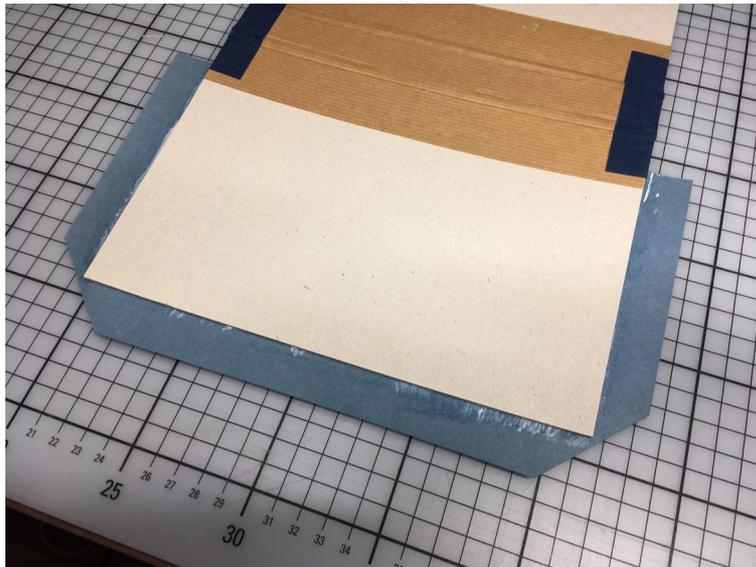


When done, apply glue to the overlapping ends of the cloth, wrap them around and fix them to the back of the cover.

Next, cut two sheets of deckle edge paper for the front and back cover. Make them big enough to leave a 2 cm margin around the cardboard so that they can be wrapped around later. Mark the position of the cover paper on the cloth using a sharp pencil – the paper will overlap the cloth. Apply glue to the back of the first sheet which goes on the front cover. Then, glue the paper on the cover such that it is flush with the position you just marked. Rub it down firmly to get rid of air bubbles. Gently press the paper into the embossed rectangle using your thumbs and work on the edges and corners using the bone folder. This works since the water in the glue makes the paper flexible, but the paper is strong enough not to rupture. It will look like this:

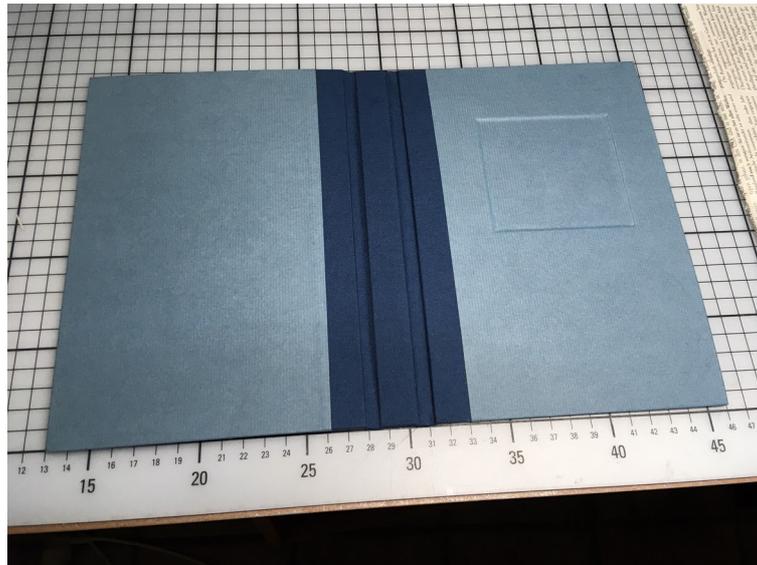


Then, flip the cover on its back. Cut off the outer corners of the cover paper at 45 degrees, 2 mm short of the corners of the cardboard:



Apply glue to the back of cover paper on the top side, wrap it around and rub it down. Use the bone folder to create a proper edge. Do the same at the bottom side. Last, work on the outer edge – apply glue and tuck the edges at the corners to the inside. Wrap the cover paper around and rub it down. Make a proper edge. Repeat for the back cover.





The cover is now finished. You've probably already spotted that it is warped – this is due to the large amount of glue involved. Just put it into the press over night with some sheets of newspaper, it'll be fine the next morning.

The final step is mounting the block into the cover. This task has to be carried out swiftly, but precise. If you screw it up you essentially annihilate all work done so far! – Actually, if done like described below it is not a big deal.

First, put a heavy piece of plywood on the cutting mat. Take the cover out of the press and fold it into the shape as in a closed book. Take care that the hinges are grooved. Put the block into the cover and make sure that it fits properly. The spine has to make close contact with the cover – this is important, otherwise, the book might be destroyed on opening it!

Put the book with the cover closed on the cutting mat with the spine right against the piece of plywood. Open the front cover all the way:



Slip a piece of newspaper between the endpaper. This will prevent glue from getting between the book pages. First, glue the gauze to the endpaper. Then, apply glue to the endpaper with brush strokes away from the spine towards to front edge. When done, take out the sheet of newspaper. Be

careful not to smear the glue! Finally, close the front cover firmly – it will stick to the glue on the end paper. Open the front cover by only a small amount to rub down the endpaper and get rid of air bubbles. Do not open the cover all the way or you'll likely destroy the book! Put a sheet of plastic – for instance, a small freezer bag – between the endpaper, facing the book block. This will prevent the book pages from buckling due to the water in the glue. Put some blotting paper above this, facing the cover, to absorb excess moisture. Close the cover again, turn the book around and repeat for the end cover. Keep the book pressed until the glue has dried completely. This will take at least 12 hours. Do not open the book before or you'll ruin it!

