

Rosie-Anne Pinney – Bookbinder

Passionate about bookbinding there is nothing I enjoy more than sharing my love for the craft with others. Bookbinding is an ancient practice that has changed very little over the centuries. I value the sense of being part of this long tradition of men and women working together to make beautiful and functional books.

Growing up in the Dorset countryside in England, I spent many hours drawing the natural world around me. Art was an integral part of my life at home and at school and this culminated in my choosing to study for a degree in Art History and Visual Studies at Oxford Polytechnic. It was there that I was very lucky to be introduced to bookbinding by the highly renowned Master Bookbinder, Ivor Robinson MBE. A kind and patient man, he ran a traditional bindery that was a place of calm and order. Although I fell in love with the craft, I decided to follow an alternative path, doing post-graduate study in Art History at the Courtauld Institute in London. This was followed by a career working with art in hospitals before I moved to the other side of the world and took up a position teaching Art and Craft History as part of the Visual Arts courses at Nelson Polytechnic, now NMIT.

After my son was born I realized this was my chance to pick up bookbinding where I'd left off. I attended numerous short courses to refresh and develop my skills and studied with Nelson bookbinder Christine Carr who had set up Cambria Craft Bindery. She taught me the specialist skills required to restore old books and when she retired in 2014, I took over her business. I currently repair and restore family heirlooms and childhood books, bind personal memoirs into books and carry out regular work for Nelson and Tasman District Councils. I have also tutored collaborative printmaking and bookbinding workshops.

As a member of the New Zealand Association of Book Crafts I value the support of my peers to continue developing my practice and enjoy participating in group projects and competitions offering a more creative approach to my work. I also work as a school librarian at Nelson College for Girls, so books are a large part of my life in more ways than one.