



Photo albums

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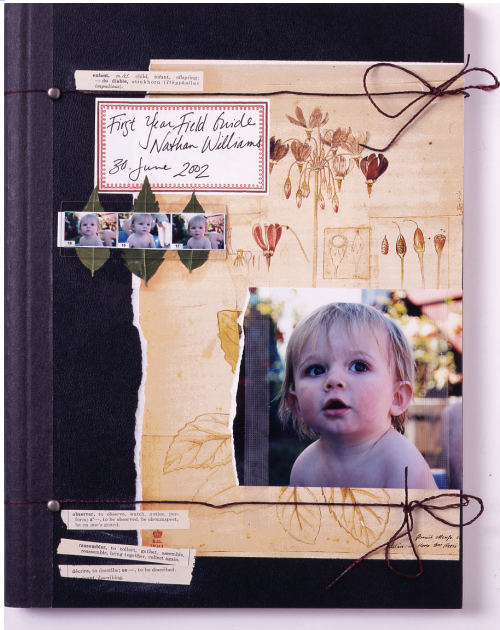
Behind every photo album is an ego—yours. But inside that ego lives an historian, an artist, and a philosopher. The historian is recording, editing, and preserving the past. The artist is arranging and embellishing pictures on the page. And the philosopher is thinking about the ideas that illuminate all this stuff. Whether it's love or fortune, self or sociability, the passage of time or its glorious denial, civilization or its discontents, somewhere in every album an idea is struggling to be put into words and pictures. If you recognize and embrace the passion and purpose behind each act of cutting and pasting, your albums will be smart, sharp, and beautiful.

SCRAPBOOKING has gone public. A vast array of specialized tools and fancy materials, as well as books, zines, and Web sites, have emerged to build (and profit from) this popular hobby. Home-based workshops, run by entrepreneurial housewives on the Tupperware model, provide training and idea exchange—along with the inevitable consumer opportunity. Although most albums document family events, some practitioners are using scrapbooks to promote their small businesses (such as dental offices and home daycare centers). Other scrapbookers start their own businesses in order to develop quirkier supplies than those promoted by the big companies. The Internet allows one-of-a-kind books to be displayed, furthering the public dissemination of these once-private documents.

You can make personal and original photographic documents while avoiding the extra layers of vellum, lace, and buttons that drape the overdressed albums of today's scrapbooking scene. Off with the corset, on with the idea! If you really need your wedding album to look like a wedding cake, make your icing out of materials and images that you find yourself. Hey, it's a scrapbook—use real scraps, not fake ones that come in cellophane bags. As a graphic design project, the photo album can encompass everything from book-binding and photography to collage, writing, and typography. Identify your goals and your talents, and go ahead and make history.

SCRAPBOOK PHILOSOPHIES

- *The book's the thing: Instead of buying an album, recycle an old diary, almanac, atlas, comic book, recipe file, or binder. Its previous life provides background for the story you want to tell.*
- *Have a point of view. Are you thinking like a scientist or a poet? A journalist or a romantic? Find the ideas mixed in your memories, and bring them forward through thoughtful framing of your materials.*
- *Ideas rock. Add content, concept, and typography through scraps of text from poetry, old dictionaries, maps, or songs.*
- *Be real. Your own writing in your own hand is an authentic alternative to the*
- *prepackaged sentiments sold at craft stores.*
- *Be an archaeologist. Mix materials and memories from different times and places. Juxtapose and counterpoint the layers of your life.*



PRESERVE

This photo album uses techniques from the “altered book” movement, the funky cousin of the more commercial Creative Memories industry. An abandoned lab notebook sets the tone for a loving yet clinical study of early childhood. Botanical illustrations meld contemporary science with Victorian natural history.

Scraps from an old French-English science dictionary spell out the scientific framework in the rhythm of elementary school. The mother’s own handwriting provides an authentic voice of observation.
Design and baby photography: Jennifer Williams
Book photography: Dan Meyers

PUBLISH

A photo album does not have to be a one-of-a-kind piece. This micro-album was conceived as a printed piece that could be shared with a circle of friends and family. Commemorating the circumcision of a baby boy, an important Jewish ritual, the book serves to announce a birth, document an event, and contextualize an ancient religious practice for a new generation.

The pages were set up in a page layout program for desktop printing on 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper; the sheets are folded in half into a signature and then stapled with a long-necked stapler. (See our chapter on printed books.)
Design: Julia Reinhard Lupton
Photography: Rosalind Reinhard

