

MINDLIN COLLECTION BOOKPLATES: digital repository and paper at the XXXI CBBB

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Isabelly (left) and Jeanne (right), authors of the paper presented at the XXXI CBBB

Between July 13 and 17, 2026, the XXXI Brazilian Congress of Librarianship and Documentation (CBBB) was held in Curitiba, Paraná, under the main theme *Libraries on the Thresholds of the Anthropocene*. The event brought together professionals, researchers, and students to discuss key issues in Librarianship and Information Science. The Guita and José Mindlin Brasileira Library (BBM/USP) participated in the conference with the presentation of the work Bookplates Digital Repository

from the Mindlin Collection (BBM/USP): an experience report on the use of Tainacan, authored by Jeanne Beserra Lopez and Isabelly Cardoso da Silva. The study was also published in the Proceedings of the XXXI CBBB, expanding the dissemination of the work developed at the institution.

The BBM was created from the library built over decades by the book collector José Mindlin and his wife, Guita Mindlin,



Promotional material for the Bookplates Digital Repository from the Mindlin Collection presented at the XXXI CBBB

consisting of works mainly related to Brazilian literature, culture, and history. In 2005, a significant portion of this collection was donated to the University of São Paulo, giving rise to the Guita and José Mindlin Brasileira Library, inaugurated in 2013. The holdings comprise thousands of works, including



Presentation of the paper *Bookplates digital repository of the Mindlin Collection (BBM/USP): an experience report on the use of Tainacan* during the XXXI CBBB, Curitiba (PR), July 2026. Credit: [CBBB], 2026.

books, manuscripts, periodicals, maps, engravings, and other documents, spanning different periods, with copies dating back to the 16th century. The diversity and rarity of this collection make BBM an important center for the preservation, research, and dissemination of Brazilian bibliographic and documentary heritage.

The paper presents the creation of a digital repository dedicated to the bookplates of the Mindlin Collection ([access here](#)), developed with the goal of contributing to their documentation, organization, and digital dissemination. Although generally small and affixed inside books, bookplates serve as important sources of information about their owners as well as the formation and history of collections. Names, symbols, inscriptions, and graphic elements found in these marks of ownership can reveal aspects related to the history of books, collecting practices, and the circulation of works. The identification and documentation of

these elements expand access to information that often remains largely invisible. For the repository's implementation, the digital library creation and management platform 'Tainacan' was used, chosen for its flexibility in organizing content and metadata. The cataloging approach considers that a bookplate is not an isolated image: by incorporating data about the owner, artist, graphic features, and relationship to the original work, it becomes possible to contextualize each piece and facilitate its retrieval for future research.

In this way, bookplates that were previously observable only within the context of a specific physical copy become accessible as part of an integrated documentary collection. By making these data available in a digital environment, the initiative encourages new research, brings the public closer to the Mindlin Collection, and highlights the role of special collections libraries in preserving and valuing of bibliographic

heritage.

In addition to the presentation of the project, participating in the CBBB allowed the authors to attend lectures and panel discussions on digital preservation, information organization and representation, applied artificial intelligence, open access, and special collections management. The event also fostered exchanges with professionals from various institutions, contributing to reflections on practices developed in university and heritage libraries.

The publication of the paper in the Proceedings represents another key outcome, documenting the project's procedures and insights so that they may reach an even broader audience.

INTERNATIONAL BOOKPLATES CONTESTS AND THE ALBUM PROJECT "EX-LÍBRIS PARA LA PAZ": possibilities for artistic imagination

By Eliana Ambrosio

Printmaker, PhD in Art History, and Associate Professor of wood engraving at the School of Fine Arts of the Federal University of Minas Gerais

and

George Gutlich

Printmaker, PhD in Arts, and Assistant Professor of Intaglio/Metal Engraving at the School of Fine Arts of the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

Bookplate belong to that class of artifacts that are complex to categorize. Usually an emblem for a library, they represent relevant aspects of a book collector or an institution that holds a particular book

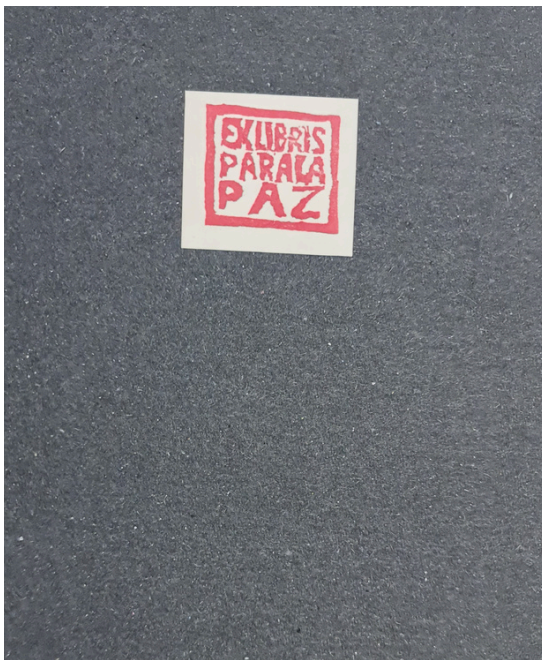
collection, as Alberto da Silva and Anselmo Maciel point out in *Livro dos Ex-libris*. Usually, they reflect traits of the subject's personality and individual aspects of their life through symbolic and allegorical references, coats of arms, and mottoes. On the other hand, they also reveal the artists' ability to capture these subtle aspects and transform them into images. Thus, an bookplate is not merely a mark of ownership; it brings together aesthetic aspects of the printmaker's personal poetics, technical skill, and capacity for synthesis to compile the ultimate identity of the book owner. From a ownership mark, it gradually gained other uses beyond its original function. It became a collectible object and, for artists, a field of investigation



Bookplates belonging to the album *Ex-Libris para la Paz*, created by artists Thayana Aquino, Juliana Almeida, Julia Corsino, and Eliana Ambrosio

poetics, moving across various fields. Often created using stamps and small-format prints, these artistic objects make it possible to trace period tastes, as well as document and investigate historical facts.

In artistic circles, the bookplate was incorporated into the field of graphic experimentation, being viewed as a medium for the development of imaginary exercises, special projects, artist books, and albums, appearing as Mini Prints in international contests and exhibitions. It is interesting to note this aspect in order to glimpse how some small-format competitions evolved into events dedicated to bookplates, such as the biennials promoted by the *Contratalla Art* gallery in Spain. Specialized in graphic works and founded in 1981, with venues in Tarragona and Barcelona, the gallery has issued regular open calls for small-format prints, since 2002.



Cover of the album *Ex-Libris para la Paz* created in 2024

From the first to the fourth edition, the contests were titled *Biennial Internacional del Gravat Contratalla*, showing that it was a Mini Print event that combined prints and ex-libris. From its seventh edition onward, it began to be referred to as *Biennial Internacional d'Ex-Libris Contratalla*.



Bookplates belonging to the album *Ex-Libris para la Paz*, created by artists Lara Machado, Mara Cifuentes, Guilzeppo Francesco, and Lucas Carvalho

Each competition resulted in awards and the publication of a catalog, aimed at fostering interest among bookplates creators by recognizing their creative potential and granting visibility to their work throughout their careers. This demonstrates the relevance of these events to the artistic community, as in addition to serving as an effective means for promoting the bookplate genre they are an engaging avenue for the

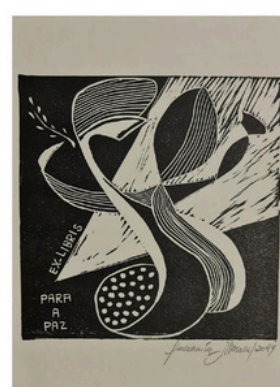
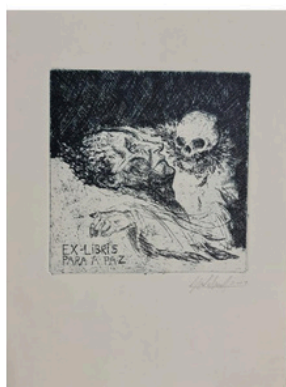
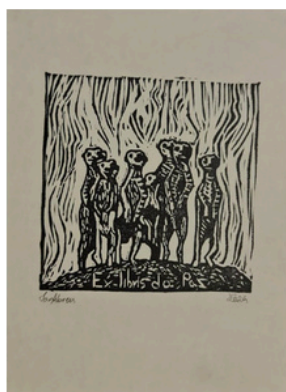
circulation and dissemination of small-format works. It is worth noting that this type of initiative also enhances the appreciation of printmaking as an art form and its technical specificities, fostering artist creativity, promoting professional visibility, and encouraging cultural exchange between countries.

During its initial editions, the calls for entries published by the *Contratalla Art* gallery specified only the format size as a mandatory requirement for artists. Even in subsequent competitions dedicated specifically to bookplates, there was a degree of flexibility. The inclusion of any print was permitted as long as it met the required dimensions, without necessarily being designated for use as an bookplate. Indeed, as Stella Maris Bertinazzo notes in her book *Ex libris: pequeno objeto de desejo*, “for an bookplate to function as such, strictly speaking, its composition must include in addition to the owner’s name or monogram, the expression ‘ex libris’ or an equivalent.” This reveals how they were understood in artistic circles: as a motif for the creation of Mini Prints. Over the course of the competitions, however, this understanding shifted, and explicit inclusion of the term *ex libris* became mandatory.

On the other hand, several biennials organized by the gallery began adopting imaginative themes, as was already occurring in other international contests – a trend that sparked debate among traditional purists. Indeed, many conservative bookplate enthusiasts reject this possibility

arguing that an bookplate cannot be intended for generic topics because it has a utilitarian function: to define the ownership of a collection of books belonging to a real individual or institution. They contend that by losing this functional characteristic and serving another purpose, they deviate from their essence, becoming purely artistic graphic artifacts.

At this point, the competition titled *Ex-Libris para la Paz*, organized by the *Associació Catalana d’Exlibristes* and *Contratalla Art* at the *XL FISAE Congress* (International Federation of Societies of Ex-Libris) in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, in 2024, can be understood as an incentive toward mediation. By adopting an unorthodox and fictional theme for an open call issued by an bookplate association within one of the field’s largest congresses, the sector signaled an openness, bringing practices that were already taking place in the artistic environment closer to the normative reflections of its specialists. The understanding that bookplates have their own rules and are not merely small-format prints had already been assimilated by the artistic field, as evidenced by a revision of the guidelines for open calls in recent biennials promoted by *Contratalla*. In this sense, the very theme dedicated to peace was fortunate for this convergence, symbolizing an attempt to bring these approaches together through the joint work of the gallery and the association in organizing the competition. Furthermore, it is worth emphasizing that the chosen



Bookplates belonging to the album *Ex-Libris para la Paz*, created by artists Ian Abreu, Lucianita Moraes, Roberto Hadad, and George Gutlich

Bookplates belonging to the album *Ex-Libris para la Paz*, created by artists Beatriz Midlej, Renata Frazzato, João Chinchilla e Lucianita Moares

theme also reiterates the role of the bookplate as a historical artifact of its time—one that not only reflects the aesthetic tastes of its era, but can also record cultural aspects, historical narratives, and social issues through its visual representations.

The year 2024 was marked by numerous armed conflicts, including the War in Ukraine, the War in Gaza and the Middle East, and the Civil War in Sudan, among other crises and combat zones. As reported by *O Globo* on June 11, 2025, 61 wars were recorded across 36 countries, and the global landscape was characterized by the continuation and intensification of major geopolitical confrontations, which resulted in thousands of casualties and widespread international instability. In this context,

the contest initiative was a source of solace, a light of solidarity in pursuit of a better world. As recorded in its catalog, in the text written by Mariano Casas Hierro:

Emerging from a great crisis, together we will dream and sing of all that springs from our hearts – to shake off the chill running through our veins, seeking refuge under the banner of bookplate and art; to bathe and intoxicate ourselves in the sun – in the sun and light that dispel our sadness.

The album *Ex-Libris para la Paz*, produced by UFMG's Woodcut and Intaglio/Metal Engraving Workshop in 2024, emerged within this context. Since 2017, the Workshop has carried out projects aimed at bringing students into contact with professional environments, competitions, and portfolios of

bookplates have been explored for this purpose. At such a fragile moment for humanity, the album was created to house the prints produced by the studio's faculty and students and submitted to the competition organized by the *Associació Catalana d'Exlibristes and Contratalla Art* at the XL FISAE Congress in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

The project was initially inspired by the suggested image of Irene, the Greek goddess of peace, as well as one of the cities described in Italo Calvino's book *Invisible Cities*. The text was discussed, highlighting its narrative potential. However, over the course of the work, production branched out into various prints, each adhering more to an internal, sensitive understanding of peace among the participants than to an iconographic convention on the subject. Throughout the discussions, the starting point centered on Calvino's passage dissolved into several paths. Only one proposal continued in that direction. What stands out most in this visual branching from a common theme is the concept of rebirth arising from destruction, followed by the issue of intolerance as a driver of conflict. Regarding technical processes, the images were executed using intaglio and relief printmaking techniques, with one incorporating *chine-collé* and another integrating a stamp.

The album brought together eighteen participants, including faculty and students: Beatriz Midlej, Cassia Alvarenga, Eliana Ambrosio, Fernando Costaa, George Gutlich, Guilzepp



Bookplates belonging to the album *Ex-Libris para la Paz*, created by artists Ian Nogueira, Cássia Alvarenga, Lucianita Moraes e Fernando Costaa

Francesco, Ian Abreu, Ian Nogueira, João Chinchilla, Julia Corsino, Juliana Almeida, Lara Machado, Lucas Carvalho, Lucianita Moraes, Mara Cifuentes, Renata Frazzato, Roberto Hadad, and Thayana Aquino.

The prints resulting from these meetings were submitted to the competition and selected for inclusion in the catalog. Finally, the twenty reproduced prints were compiled into an album and distributed to all participants. Thus, through this collection, the Woodcut and Intaglio/Metal Engraving Workshop at UFMG's School of Fine Arts contributed to this reflection on Peace, recording the desire for it to take root and endure among us.

ALBERTO LIMA: A Life Dedicated to the Art of Bookplates

By Mary Komatsu
Caçadora de Ex-libris



Alberto Lima. Reproduction from *Correio da Manhã* - RJ, January 31, 1924

In the history of Brazilian bookplate culture, few names deserve to be remembered with as much reverence as Alberto Lima, who was born on July 29, 1898, in Rio de Janeiro, and who died on August 1, 1971. His career represents one of the most important chapters in the history of bookplates in Brazil, marked by his dedication to art, research, and the promotion of a tradition that found in him one of its greatest advocates.

A multit talented artist, Alberto Lima

distinguished himself as a draftsman, watercolorist, heraldist, and illustrator. It was, however, in the world of bookplates that he built a unique legacy. Over the course of several decades, he produced hundreds of marks of book ownership for intellectuals, military officers, physicians, teachers, writers, artists, and institutions, demonstrating extraordinary sensitivity in creating compositions that combined heraldic precision, graphic refinement, and a profound understanding of each owner's identity.

His work goes far beyond its artistic dimension. Each bookplate designed by Alberto Lima is a historical document capable of revealing personal trajectories, family ties, professions, cultural interests, and symbols that engage with the history of books and reading. Within these small graphic works are condensed narratives that continue to arouse the interest of researchers and collectors.

In addition to his prolific activity as an artist, Alberto Lima played a decisive role in organizing the Brazilian bookplate movement. He was one of the leading figures behind the first exhibitions devoted to bookplates in the country, encouraged the emergence of new collectors, wrote on the subject for almanacs, newspapers, and magazines, and actively participated in the creation of the *Clube Internacional de Ex-Libris* (International Bookplate Club) in 1949. This pioneering initiative brought Brazilian and foreign scholars closer together and helped establish Brazil within the international bookplate community.

His work was also closely connected with important cultural institutions. He participated in exhibitions held at the *Museu Nacional de Belas Artes* (National Museum of Fine Arts), the *Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro* (Municipal Theatre of Rio de Janeiro), and various cultural organizations, broadening recognition of this miniature art form and demonstrating that bookplates go far beyond the simple identification of book ownership: they are genuine artistic expressions and important witnesses to bibliographic memory.

More than fifty years after his death, Alberto Lima's presence endures. His bookplates remain preserved in libraries, archives, and private collections, continuing to attract the interest of researchers and inspire new generations of artists and collectors. His work has stood the test of time because it brings together beauty, technical mastery, and historical significance.

In recent years, I have devoted myself to researching his life and artistic production. This work has revealed an artist of far greater importance than the limited existing references would suggest. With each document discovered in old newspapers, each catalogue recovered, and each bookplate identified, another piece emerges in the great mosaic of his life. Today, this survey already encompasses hundreds of bookplates produced by Alberto Lima, making it possible, little by little, to reconstruct his extraordinary contribution to Brazilian graphic culture. In this month when we commemorate his birth, we pay tribute to an artist who

made bookplates his life's mission. His dedication continues to inspire all those who believe in the importance of preserving the memory of books, pursuing historical research, and recognizing the value of these small works of art that endure across generations.

For me, there is also a coincidence filled with symbolism. Alberto Lima died on August 1, 1971. I was born on August 1. Although in different years, we share the same date on the calendar. I like to imagine that this coincidence reinforces, in a very special way, the connection that now binds me to his story. Researching his life, identifying his works, and helping restore his legacy to the prominent place it deserves are, for me, more than a research project: they are a way of preserving the memory of one of the greatest figures in Brazilian bookplate culture.

May Alberto Lima's legacy continue to inspire researchers, artists, librarians, collectors, and all those who recognize in bookplates far more than a mark of ownership: an expression of art, identity, and memory.

UNDER THE MONOCLE: Bookplate in focus

By Luiz Felipe Stelling

Roberto Thut (1901-1950) was a dactyloscopy technician (fingerprint identification), heraldist, writer and journalist. As editor of the journal *Boletim da Sociedade Filatelica Paulista* (São Paulo Philatelic Society Bulletin) he wrote classic articles and a catalogue of

Brazilian stamps. He participated also in the philately commission of the journal of the Historical and Geographic Institute of São Paulo, of which he was a member. Designed by himself, his bookplate is composed of elements derived from postage stamps (the perforated edge), a stylized escutcheon, his name, inscription *ex libris* and *motto en haec mea ornamenta* (these are my ornaments).



The printed bookplate is a combination of a line block (the fingerprint) and a wood block engraved by postage stamp specialist Belarmino Pinheiro. The fingerprint is always found in black ink, and the border is known printed in red, black or green.

In this bookplate, the identity of the designer is not immediately evident, since the only indication of authorship is that of the engraver (the signature B. Pinheiro). However, it was actually conceived by the owner, as attested by a description typed by Thut himself, now in the possession of the collector Luiz Felipe Stelling. It can therefore be stated that this is an *ipse fecit* bookplate (i.e., one in which the owner is also the designer).

BOOKPLATE (Poetry)

By Raphael Greenhalgh

Librarian at the University of Brasilia, PhD in Information Science

Capsule of me,
Refinement of the sublime,
Seal that rejects the decree
Of those who depart forced by time.

A tiny art form grand,
That elevates our state,
Like shrubs across the land,
Small plants that captivate.

The mark of passion's flame
And jealousy's deep trace,
Of fading tales we name,
Of taking ownership's place.

A crest of high degree,
An erotic design,
A symbol sure to be,
Whatever your wits define.