



Linda Ekstrom's Tendrils & Trunk



Top images: *Trunk*
Bottom images: *Tendrils*

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<http://visionvoicepractice.blogspot.com/2011/03/linda-ekstroms-tendrils-truck.html>

When considering the power of the written word, one must also be keenly aware of the way in which the medium of a book affects the way in which an audience approaches the material within its covers. Although the text found in a magazine, a newspaper or a bound-book might be similar in content, they each invite the reader to interpret the information presented in often vastly distinct ways. Many of the works on display in the Biola Library's show *Matter and Spirit*, demonstrate the artists' exploration of the physicality or spirituality of matter or the intellectual or emotional weight of a chosen subject matter through a variety of media. While many of the pieces utilize video, multimedia, drawing or print, several artists chose to explore the show's themes through the utilization of books as their sculptural medium.

Linda Ekstrom, manipulated the same text repeatedly in order to create new meaning in each piece. Ekstrom often represents the kinesthetic energy of book, in which the movement of the materials is meant to symbolize the manner in which books extend beyond the confines of the page and interact with our ways of thinking and being. There are two particular pieces that created intriguing visual statements: one was called *Tendrils* and the other entitled *Trunk*. The piece *Tendrils*, composed entirely out of the pages of the prophets of the Old Testament, is a series of wrapped cords that are suspended within their case in order to allow the trails of paper to coil downward like the roots of a plant or sprouts of a vine. This technique creates both a visually compelling and mystifying effect, but also allows for a rich "reading" of the piece as the way in which Christians view the Old Testament prophets. In contrast, Ekstrom's piece, *Trunk*, does not possess the same visual movement found in *Tendrils*, and instead uses an entire Bible, rolled and bound in gold thread, to fashion a small, round column. This piece does not lack interest, as its description might suggest, since the way in which the pages fan in contrast with the wandering gold thread along the perimeter generates an active visual gesture, albeit in a highly distinct manner from the cords of *Tendrils*. The structures and titles of both pieces evoke the rich botanical metaphors found within Scripture, while remaining sufficiently abstract so that one does not feel overpowered by the artist's meaning. **Amanda Rountree**