

Rachel Simmons

Artist-Educator

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Biography

Rachel Simmons is an artist-educator teaching printmaking and book arts at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. She began teaching there after completing her MFA in Painting & Drawing at Louisiana State University. She currently leads the Book Arts Guild of Central Florida and founded the Rollins College Book Arts Collection. Her diverse practice explores tensions between individuals and societies as we navigate the impacts of globalization, technology, species decline and climate change. Endlessly curious about the natural world and our relationship with it, Rachel often collaborates with scholars from other academic disciplines and members of her community to create her work. In Rachel's socially engaged art projects, she asks community participants to think critically and creatively about our relationship with nature.

Interdisciplinary collaborative projects include the environmental graphic narrative "Future Bear" with writer/historian Julian Chambliss, and "Visible Climate: Postcards from America's Changing Landscapes" with geographer Lee Lines. Rachel has traveled to Antarctica, Iceland, Namibia, the Galapagos Islands, Hawaii and many of the US National Parks to research environmental issues pertaining to these projects. During and after her travels, she engages in an active practice of reflection through visual journals, zines, comics and altered books.

Rachel's artist's books—which address personal, environmental and social issues—are currently available through Vamp and Tramp Booksellers and 23Sandy Gallery, and can be found in special collections across the US including Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, Baylor University, The University of Central Florida, Yale University, The Berkeley Environmental Design Library, Miami University and many more. Her work has been exhibited regionally, nationally, internationally at venues such as The San Francisco Center for the Book, The Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, The American Association for the Advancement of Science, in Washington, D.C., the Florence Biennale in Italy and the Deiglan Gallery in Akureyi, Iceland. Her recent body of work, *The Language of Watching* explores the particularities of our human relationship with birds through artist's books and prints, and invites community participants to become collaborators. Rachel was the 2009 recipient of the Service-Learning Faculty Award for the State of Florida from Florida Campus Compact and the following year, delivered a Ted talk about her practice, "Green Art" at Tedx Orlando.