

Course program 2026

Bookbinding and Design, Book restoration

Masterclass Design Binding

Ascona 1

Instructor: Luigi Castiglioni
Date/Location: 16th–25th February 2026 / Ascona
Language: English, French and Italian
Course fee: CHF 1'990.00
Participants: Advanced, bookbinding skills required

This course is designed as an intensive immersion into the world of fine bindings. It offers an in-depth introduction to the art of making and designing a traditional French binding. The book block is worked with stabs and sewn on hemp cords. The book is covered with box calf leather.

Folder & Co.

Ascona 2

Instructor: Matthias Grimm
Date/Location: 12th–14th March 2026 / Ascona
Language: German
Course fee: CHF 690.00
Participants: Beginners, no previous experience required

This course teaches the basics of bookbinding step by step and introduces participants to working with paper, cardboard, linen and glue. We will create an elegant conference folder with notepad, a simple folder with elastic closure, a classic folder with flaps, and a ring binder.

Sketchbook or notebook – hand-bound according to old tradition

Zurich 3

Instructor: Andrea Kohler and Doris Feldmann
Date/Location: 13th and 14th March 2026 / Zurich
Language: German
Course fee: CHF 750.00
Participants: Beginners, no previous experience required

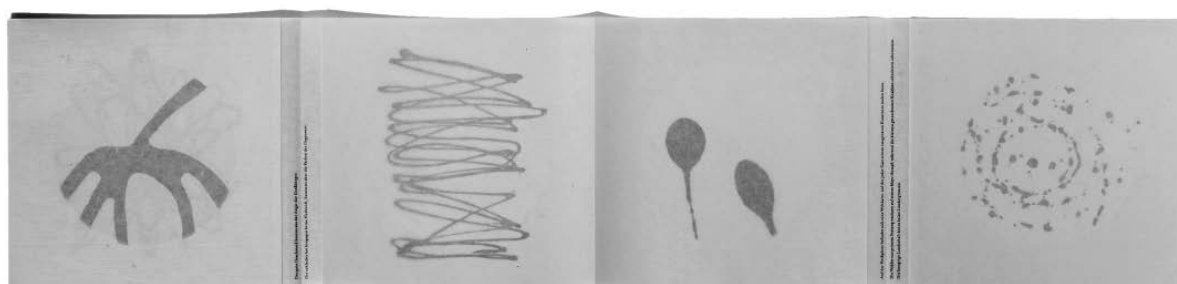
Using traditional techniques of bookbinding, participants will create in this course a sketchbook or notebook using classic tools and high-quality materials. Beautiful coloured papers from all over the world will be used. Step by step, the book is constructed, sewn, glued and covered.

Creating a book from start to finish

Ascona 4

Instructor: Matthias Grimm
Date/Location: 16th–19th March 2026 / Ascona
Language: German
Course fee: CHF 800.00
Participants: Beginners, no previous experience required

Have you always dreamed of designing and binding your very own book? In this course you will learn the basics of book binding, from the choice of paper to folding and creasing and binding of the spine of the book.



Okonomiyaki as a book

Ascona 5

Instructor: Veronika Schäpers
Date/Location: 30th March–3rd April 2026 / Ascona
Language: German and English
Course fee: CHF 1'150.00
Participants: Beginners, previous experience in design and bookbinding is an advantage

Based on the abstracted motif of the special Japanese pancake “Okonomiyaki”, we will create simple drawings and drip paintings, arrange 15 poetic text fragments by author Yoko Tawada and conceptualize a unique artist book in content and form.

Bookbinding and Design, Book restoration

The centro del bel libro ascona is the leading institute for advanced education around all aspects of the book, paper, bookbinding and design as well as book restoration. It offers hand bookbinders, graphic designers, conservators, and interested persons with appropriate experience a forum for learning and engagement that encompasses both technical and creative aspects of bookbinding and design as well as book restoration. Course participants have the opportunity to further their education and broaden their skills by learning new techniques and methods from internationally recognized instructors who stand at the forefront of their craft. The unique environment of the cbl allows for unparalleled creative exchange with other professionals in the field, provides new inspiration and fresh approaches to your creative practice, as well as an opportunity for self-reflection away from daily stresses and work-life demands.



Pencil case and pencil box with closure

Zurich 6

Instructor: Andrea Kohler and Doris Feldmann
Date/Location: 10th and 11th April 2026 / Zurich
Language: German
Course fee: CHF 750.00
Participants: Beginners, no previous experience required

Practical and elegant – in this course, you will create a customised pencil case with a magnetic closure or press stud, ideal for your desk or when you are on the go. A selection of high-quality materials is available for the cover and lining, which can be combined as desired.



Paper objects

Ascona 7

Instructor: Fridolin Gähwiler
Date/Location: 14th–17th April 2026 / Ascona
Language: German
Course fee: CHF 920.00
Participants: Beginners, no previous experience required

Hardly any other material can be transformed so quickly and in so many different ways into amazing shapes as paper. Geometric surfaces are turned into spheres, stars, Platonic or Archimedean solids, folded, honeycomb or accordion spheres by folding, cutting, creasing or scoring.

Wood veneer open binding

Ascona 8

Instructor: Roger Green
Date/Location: 4th and 5th May 2026 / Ascona
Language: German and English
Course fee: CHF 460.00
Participants: Advanced, bookbinding skills required

This workshop will present a new method for treating wood veneer to facilitate its usage as a covering material. It will involve producing a decoratively open sewn binding, with a flexible leather spine and boards covered in the treated wood veneer.

Leather Inlays

Ascona 9

Instructor: Roger Green
Date/Location: 6th–8th May 2026 / Ascona
Language: German and English
Course fee: CHF 690.00
Participants: Previous experience, although helpful, is not a prerequisite

This workshop will present a new method for inlaying leather. It will cover the technical foundations and then the method will be practiced by making A6 leather covered sample cards. Afterwards, the participants will make a small full leather binding with their own inlay designs.

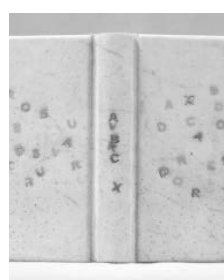


Book clasps – Function and Finishing

Zurich 10

Instructor: Kevin Cilurzo
Date/Location: 6th–8th May 2026 / Zurich
Language: German and English
Course fee: CHF 690.00
Participants: Advanced, bookbinding skills required

Book clasps have been an important part of books since the early Middle Ages. This course focuses on book clasps. Using various tools and historical models, we will file, drill and bend brass sheets to create simple clasps – with and without decorations.



Mini books

Ascona 11

Instructor: Roland Meuter
Date/Location: 19th–23rd May 2026 / Ascona
Language: German, explanations in Italian
Course fee: CHF 1'150.00
Participants: Advanced, previous experience in bookbinding required

This course focuses on working with small books – so-called mini books, which pose a particular challenge in terms of bookbinding. Various interesting techniques are taught and tried out in practice: from classic paper binding to half-leather or full-leather binding to parchment binding.



Conservation Boxes and Enclosures

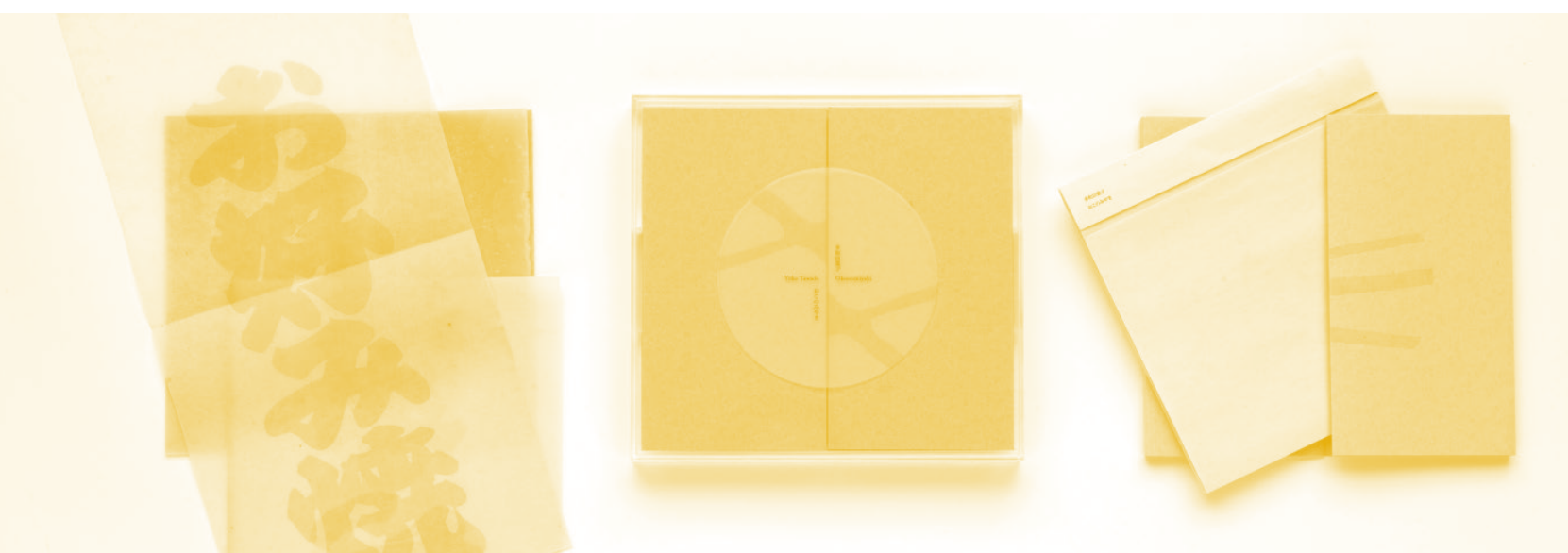
Ascona 12

Instructor: Paola Fagnola
Date/Location: 15th–19th June 2026 / Ascona
Language: English, Italian on request
Course fee: CHF 1'150.00
Participants: Advanced, bookbinding skills required

The course aims to provide participants with the boxmaking knowledge needed to design and create enclosures and supports for books, documents, and small objects. Participants will make various models, from lightweight card to lined cardboard.

Course program 2026

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The Parchment binding

Ascona 13

Instructor: Ireen Kranz
Date/Location: 22nd–27th June 2026 / Ascona
Language: German, explanations in English
Course fee: CHF 1'290.00
Participants: Advanced, previous experience in bookbinding required

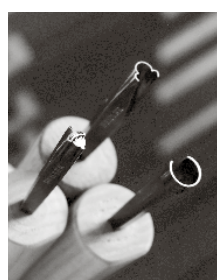
The course offers the opportunity to deepen your knowledge of working with parchment and expand your craftsmanship skills in classic bookbinding. Based on the technique of French fine binding, a parchment binding is created in six days, which is built directly on the book block.

“Edelpappband” binding

Ascona 14

Instructor: Ireen Kranz
Date/Location: 30th June–3rd July 2026 / Ascona
Language: German, explanations in English
Course fee: CHF 920.00
Participants: Advanced, previous experience in bookbinding required

In this course, we will create two versions of the Edelpappband binding: one with leather-covered edges at the head and tail, and one with a reinforced cap and hidden corners. Coloured edges and title designs will be developed, allowing the decorative paper to unfold its full effect.



Finishing Tool Making: A Practical Approach

Zurich 15

Instructor: Brien Beidler
Date/Location: 30th June–3rd July 2026 / Zurich
Language: English
Course fee: CHF 960.00
Participants: Bookbinding experience is an advantage

Students in this workshop will learn the skills needed to fashion their own custom finishing tools. Beginning with brass stock, students will use a variety of metalworking techniques to create an array of stamps and they will also learn to fashion their own wooden handles.

Leather sharpening with the “Ascona knife”

Ascona 16

Instructor: Beat Frei
Date/Location: 31st August and 1st September 2026 / Ascona
Language: German and English
Course fee: CHF 460.00
Participants: Bookbinding experience is an advantage

This course teaches the basics of leather sharpening with the traditional “Ascona knife.” It demonstrates a key technique that can be performed with two different hand positions – ideal for beginners as well as those who want to improve their skills.



Limp – Link – Long. Exploring Techniques Hidden in Libraries across Europe

Ascona 17

Instructor: Adam Larsson
Date/Location: 7th–11th September 2026 / Ascona
Language: English, Swedish on request
Course fee: CHF 1'150.00
Participants: Advanced, bookbinding skills required

Students will be introduced to Northern European limp vellum binding styles. The class begins with a short lecture and in the technical part, we will focus on materials and details, such as a rigid spine plate, weaving of the sewing thread, markers, and closures.

Embossing – Classic titles and creative decorations

Ascona 18

Instructor: Sandra Merten
Date/Location: 14th–16th September 2026 / Ascona
Language: German, explanations in English
Course fee: CHF 690.00
Participants: Bookbinding experience is an advantage

The Prägnant embossing press is a versatile tool. This course focuses on the basics of title setting. In addition, the press opens up numerous creative possibilities, which we will explore together: various embossing tools, foils and colours are used, as well as different materials.

Woven structure variations

Ascona 19

Instructor: Jan Peter Zimmerlich
Date/Location: 21st–25th September 2026 / Ascona
Language: German, explanations in English or French
Course fee: CHF 1'150.00
Participants: Bookbinding experience is an advantage

This course focuses on two innovative, adhesive-free bookbinding techniques with woven structures: The Moonspine variant is a book with fixed covers and a round, stiff spine. The Self Supporting Structure is a flexible book with long woven ribbons.

Restoration of parchment volumes Part 1

Ascona 20

Instructor: Renate Mesmer
Date/Location: 28th September–2nd October 2026 / Ascona
Language: German and English
Course fee: CHF 1'199.00
Participants: Advanced, previous experience in book restoration required

This two-part course focuses on the professional restoration of historical parchment volumes. The focus is on its structure, properties, typical ageing processes and the limits of its resilience. Theoretical content will be taught and initial practical exercises will be carried out.

Restoration of parchment volumes Part 2

Ascona 21

Instructor: Renate Mesmer
Date/Location: 5th–9th October 2026 / Ascona
Language: German and English
Course fee: CHF 1'199.00
Participants: Advanced, previous experience in book restoration required

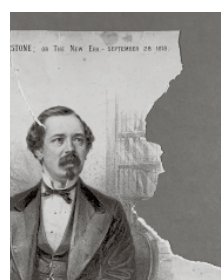
This two-part course focuses on the professional restoration of historical parchment volumes. In the second week, participants apply the knowledge they have acquired to objects they have brought. Broken folds and stitching, deformed covers and typical damage to parchment are restored.

Open studio – Individual book restoration projects

Ascona 22

Instructor: Renate Mesmer
Date/Location: 12th–16th October 2026 / Ascona
Language: German and English
Course fee: CHF 1'199.00
Participants: Advanced, basic knowledge in book restoration required

This course offers open, supervised studio time for intensive work on individual book restoration projects. Both traditional materials and techniques are used, as well as selected alternative materials, whose application is discussed, tested, and evaluated under guidance.



Paper Conservation: Traditions, Innovations and Methods

Bern 23

Instructor: Renate Mesmer
Date/Location: 19th–23rd October 2026 / Bern
Language: German and English
Course fee: CHF 1'199.00
Participants: Advanced, previous experience in book restoration required

Starting with basic methods such as simple tear repairs and filling losses, we progress to damage from mold, brittle paper, and the mechanical stabilization of paper affected by ink corrosion. Participants will explore topics such as humidification, washing, drying, flattening, etc.

Japanese bookbinding

Zurich 24

Instructor: Sandra Merten
Date/Location: 20th and 21st November 2026 / Zurich
Language: German
Course fee: CHF 460.00
Participants: Beginners, no previous experience required

Japanese bookbinding is characterised by its simplicity, elegance and special materials. This course teaches preparatory techniques, such as backing paper or fabric. We try out traditional stitching patterns such as Yotsume Toji, Asano-ha Toji and Kikko Toji to create individual books.

Bookbinder in Residence

The Bookbinder in Residence program offers the opportunity to devote yourself intensively and undisturbed to your own projects, away from everyday life. An inspiring environment creates space for intensive work, creative energy and new inspiration. Details can be found on our website.



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