

Treasure Box by Paula MacGregor



If you Wish by Paula MacGregor - in the box

If you wish hard enough – something is bound to happen

It was because of my interest in boxes and found objects that I decided to work with the Treasure Box Project. When my box

arrived I unwrapped it and put it on my table, I placed my hands on the closed lid and shut my eyes as I wondered what was inside.

I removed the lid and started to investigate the contents: the items that caught my attention were: a tiny wooden cow with only three legs, torn out pages from a vintage Ladybird Book showing exotic animals and several pieces of fabric in the beige to orange colour range. There were also some wooden sticks, a couple of wooden blocks, sand paper and squared paper – as well as a flat key.

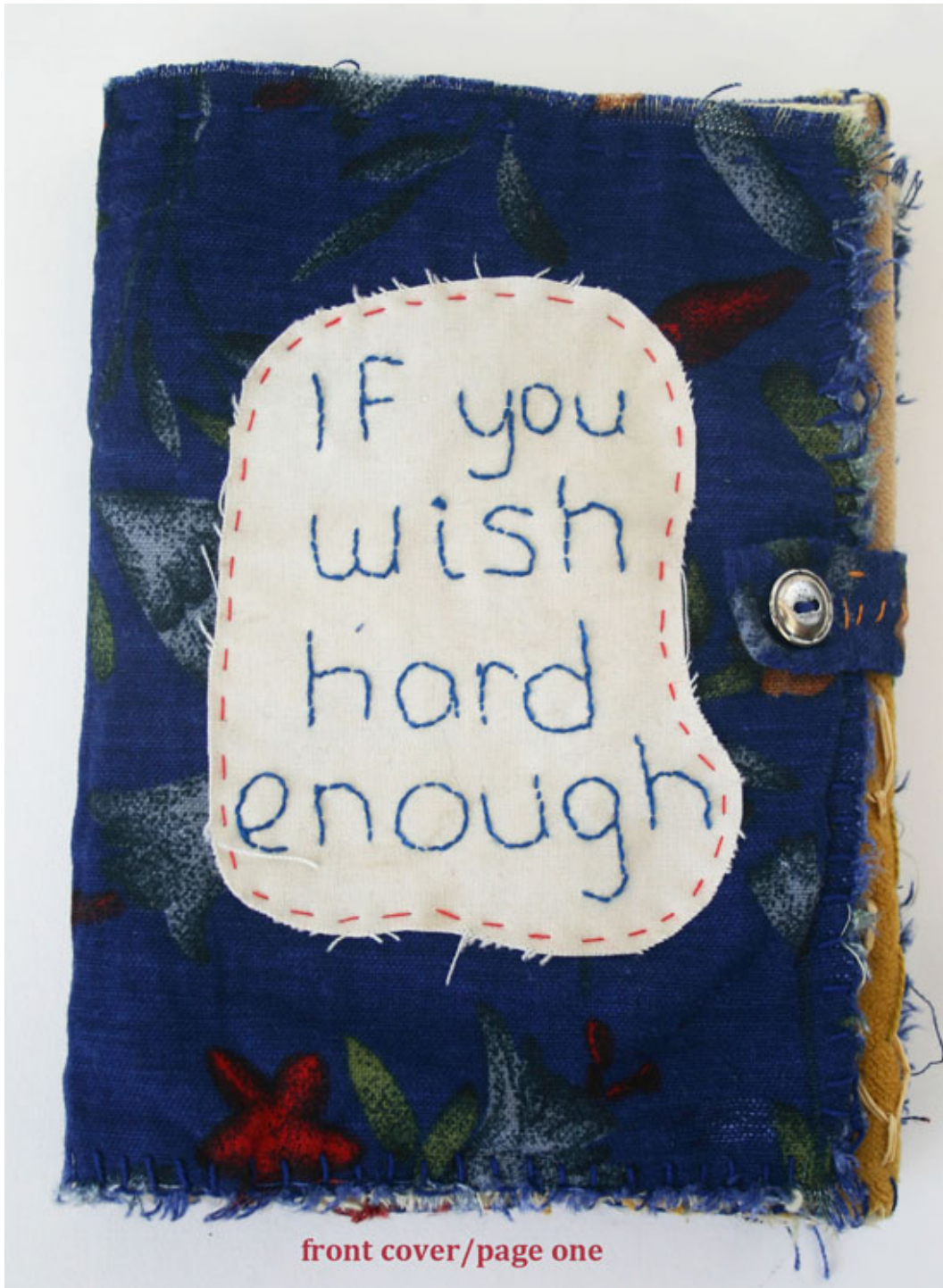
I played around with the contents over many days, trying out different combinations and ideas before settling on the theme of making a fabric book.

I started with a neutral cotton cloth for the backing, which I could build up on. After choosing the multi coloured fabric from my stash, I manipulated it into different surfaces, adding the fabric samples from the box at the same time.

The pages from the vintage book were crumpled and rubbed until they became soft and pliable. Everything was held together with bold blanket stitches, including the words of the story, which had been written in running stitch. I added some basic embroidery stitches and a few beads here and there to give the pages extra interest.

The very first page starts the story with the words: 'If you wish hard enough...' the next page you see the little cow looking up at a huge lion, his speech bubble says 'oh please' – but what is he asking for?

The story progresses, eventually you see the tiny wooden cow is now a tiger-cow - his brindle patches have turned into tiger stripes. Is this what he was asking for do you think? The final words say: 'something is bound to happen'.



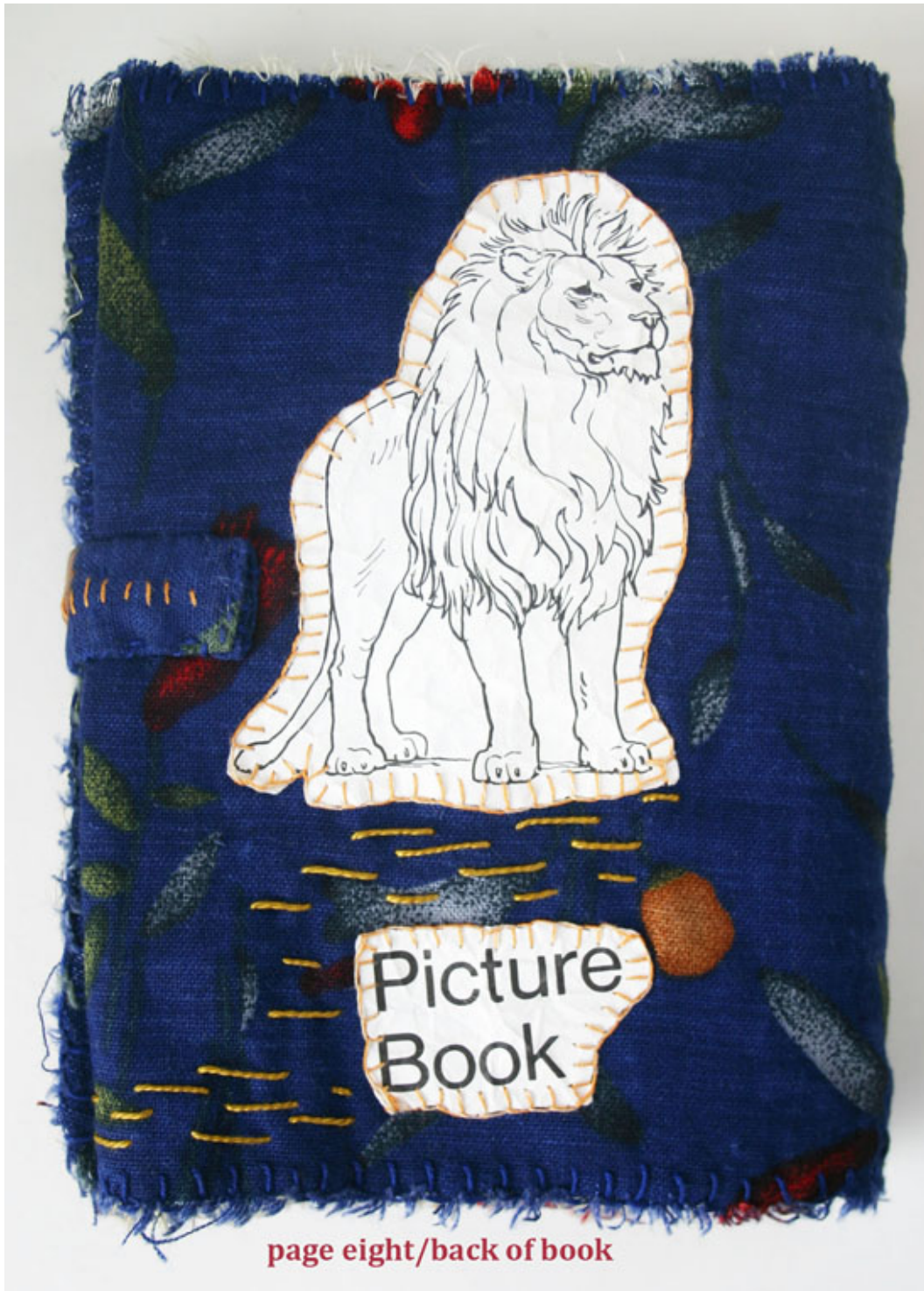
If you Wish Book



If you Wish



If you Wish



If you Wish



If you Wish

'By placing everyday objects out of place new aesthetics occur and new realms are entered'

I create narrative through found objects - I select objects that attract my attention and explore relationships between them. Discarding those that do not work and inviting new ones in. Naturalia and artificialia sit side by side in my work, arousing interest and curiosity in the viewer.

Curiosity is a key word for me, as it is the historic cabinets of curiosity that are my driving force, which is often apparent in my work. I explore ways of using archiving, classification, association and connections and am particularly interested in the areas where art and science meet. The New York Times recently called this way of working 'the new crossover art'.

My 'found object' assemblage's use 'bottles, books and boxes' as their vehicle, whereas the resulting narrative, or story telling, is shared through the new and exciting medium of artists books.

My books are not in the usual book format - perhaps a more apt description would be that they are 'assemblages with a narrative'.

Paula MacGregor

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