

Mindy Belloff's *A Golden Thread: The Minotaur - A Contemporary Illumination*
is currently on exhibit at the **PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM**
on view September 28, 2019 to March 29, 2020

PEM's Phillips Library's recent acquisition of Mindy Belloff's *A Golden Thread*, a contemporary reinterpretation of Hawthorne's short story *The Minotaur*, considers the links between past and present, visual and verbal, and how artists have drawn on one another's work throughout time.



Nathaniel Hawthorne's Creative Legacy - by Alyse Diamantides

Salem's native son Nathaniel Hawthorne has inspired artists for nearly 200 years - and not just writers. Modern day artist Mindy Belloff tapped into his genius when she designed *A Golden Thread: The Minotaur*, a contemporary reinterpretation of Hawthorne's short story *The Minotaur*, in his children's book *Tanglewood Tales*. Offering a fresh perspective on the ancient Greek myth through a bold mix of typography and color, *A Golden Thread* is the centerpiece of the Peabody Essex Museum's new exhibition, *The Creative Legacy of Nathaniel Hawthorne: Selections from the Phillips Library Collection*. This show marks the first exhibition in a gallery dedicated to the collections of the Phillips Library (please note new closing date).

See: <https://www.pem.org/blog/nathaniel-hawthornes-creative-legacy>

Intima Press is the only private press in Manhattan. The Archive of the Press and student ephemera from over a decade of letterpress and book arts workshops at Studio on the Square is now held at **Columbia University's Butler Library**, New York City.



View unique design bindings of *A Golden Thread*
And pages from a new edition in progress, at the upcoming

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Mindy Belloff's latest contribution, *A Golden Thread*, is a genuine masterpiece of art and design, an exuberant mix of color, texture, style, and format. The title alludes to the thread which Ariadne, daughter of wicked King Minos of Crete, gives Theseus to retrace his steps through the labyrinth after slaying the horrid Minotaur. Like Prince Theseus, we are invited to grasp the thread as we follow his adventures from Athens to Crete and back again. Our journey, though, is through an evolution in colors and fonts and papers that closely track the fortunes of Theseus. As an artist's rendition of the stark and often cruel world of classical mythology, it is a real *tour de force*.

I have always admired the subtlety and classical restraint of Belloff's work, and those qualities are certainly on full display here. She has a particularly rich color palette, with extraordinary blues, reds, and golds. But as she hews to the text and the menace it forebodes, the stately pages of the opening sections become more agitated, with type and color taking on more ominous appearances until we enter the labyrinth and the culminating contest between Theseus and the ghastly Minotaur, the devourer of the children of Athens. All restraint is gone as big bold block-like words leap off the page, echoing the cacophony of the struggle between good and evil. It is an extraordinary presentation of the turbulent combat, all the more jarring given the more balanced world that bookends it.

Belloff is deeply learned in the history of the book and of art. She acknowledges the traditions that have influenced her in creating this remarkable book: Medieval/Renaissance traditions of design and illumination; the designs on Japanese inro, the nested boxes that hung from obis and served as, in effect, purses; and images taken from ancient Cretan and Mycenaean art. Alongside these traditions, Belloff intersperses moments of whimsy and abandon as she places figures of her own invention in the margins of the page, much like a medieval illuminator having some fun in the midst of serious business. And not to abandon the theme of the labyrinth, the book contains Carl Jung's *Anima Animus* in labyrinthian format. *A Golden Thread* comes bound in blue and white quarter leather, with gold filaments cross-hatching the spine that suggest Portolan maps and hence Theseus' journey itself. The book is a stunning achievement by one of our most gifted artists, mature and at the peak of her powers. Full Review at: <http://intimapress.com/a-golden-thread-2/>

