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Literary Snapshot

By Jeff Baker

Who: Margaret Davis

Residence: Portland

What: Legal editor; book artist.

Book artist? Davis began studying bookbinding at Scripps College and continued it during her years in Chicago, where she worked as an editor for *Outside* magazine and the *Chicago Reader*. In 1996 she received a grant to study traditional bookbinding in China.

The China experience: While she was studying in China, Davis read a ragtag English-language newspaper called *Beijing Scene*. She returned to China in 1997 and became its managing editor until the Chinese government shut the paper down.

Shut it down? *Beijing Scene* became extremely popular during its short life, so popular it attracted the attention of the government. It was more of a Beijing version of London's *Time Out* than a political newspaper, and it had no trouble attracting advertisers, unlike the government-run English newspapers. *Beijing Scene* was forced underground and eventually forced out of business, and Davis returned to Portland. "It was really the front lines of independent journalism," she says of the experience.

Another Chinese connection: Davis has long produced address books and privately printed books on a commission basis. Her first full book, *Beijing Heart*, is an essay about the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre written by a friend, Larry Hanbrook, who camped with the students and witnessed the government crackdown. Davis went back to China last year to take photographs for the book, which she completed during a residency at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire.

About *Beijing Heart*: Davis printed 100 copies of the book and used an experimental process to reproduce her photographs. The book is available from Ma Nao Books, P.O. Box 12383, Portland, OR 97212.

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