An active program of exhibitions and loans is the primary point of contact between the Morgan’s holdings and the public. Each year, several hundred printed books, bound manuscripts, and artists’ sketchbooks are displayed in five different in-house galleries, and many more are shown at external venues. The need to present bound materials in an intellectually stimulating, visually appealing, and fully accessible way sometimes challenges the preservation imperative. While all aspects of exhibition development address these combined mandates, it is the humble and often unnoticed book cradle that shoulders much of the load, both metaphorically and physically. This presentation will provide an overview of the Morgan’s exhibition preparation and design process, and the conservator’s role as part of the exhibition team. The interdependency of cradle costs, production time, space needs and design requirements will be discussed in the context of safe and sustainable exhibition practice.

Maria Fredericks is Drue Heinz Book Conservator in the Thaw Conservation Center, Morgan Library & Museum, New York, where she is responsible for examination, treatment, and safe exhibition of a wide range of rare books and bound manuscripts. She was Head of Conservation at Columbia University Libraries from 1998-2005; her prior experience includes positions at the Huntington Library, the Winterthur Library, the Newberry Library and the Library of Congress. She currently supervises book conservation graduate students from NYU’s Institute of Fine Arts, as well as interns and post-graduate fellows, and is a member of the Visiting Committee for the Mellon Library & Archive Conservation Training initiative. She has taught and lectured on a variety of topics related to library conservation and historical binding structures.
Book Mounts at the Morgan Library & Museum: Preservation, Access, and Aesthetics

Maria Fredericks
Drue Heinz Book Conservator
Thaw Conservation Center
Morgan Library & Museum, New York

Don’t Rock the Cradle Symposium, Folger Shakespeare Library, April 1-3, 2015
Façade and front entrance, 225 Madison Ave  
Renzo Piano addition  

Gilbert Court interior, with  
*A Certain Slant of Light*, installation by  
Spencer Finch
Treasures of Islamic Manuscript Painting
December 9, 2011 - February 5, 2012
Engelhard Gallery
Rotunda of the 1908 McKim Building
Rotating Americana, books and manuscripts
Treasures from the Vault (highlights rotations)
East Room of the McKim Building, Mr. Morgan’s Library
Hebrew Illumination for Our Time: The Art of Barbara Wolff
February 6 - May 3, 2015
Mounted books for *Beatrix Potter: The Picture Letters*, 2012 - viewed from back and front
Miracles in Miniature: The Art of the Master of Claude de France
May 30 - September 14, 2014
Brass cradles for miniature books – open armature mount to show jeweled cover
Illuminating Faith: The Eucharist in Medieval Life and Art
May 17 - September 15, 2013
Foam-core board cradle with recesses for binding hardware
Vertical mount with brass rods at each end

Three-piece acrylic cradle, 30-degree tilt

Dan Flavin: Drawing
February 17 - July 1, 2012
Small diaries mounted vertically with padded brass tabs

The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives
January 21 - May 22, 2011
Modular aluminum hardware in standard sizes and angles; finished cradle with hardware attached
Brackets and cleats: Small, medium, large
Four possible angles for tilt; combine angled cleats under book for safe opening
Angles under book boards: 45 - 15

Angles under book boards: 30 - 30
Cradle with anodized aluminum support; dark, recessed legs designed to disappear into shadow below book
All-acrylic cradle with sanded, bronze-colored legs
Dark acrylic legs also disappearing into shadow
Foam-core wedges at 15, 30, 45 and 60 degrees; angles match metal cradle hardware
Book set up between wedges for measuring
Book measured for cradle using standard angles; trace foot of book through rigid sheet of thin plastic (Vivak®)
Cradle profile prepared for fabricator
Standard case sizes and heights
Case layouts and floor plans
Templates for case layout
Curator’s working case layout
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Text block supported from below with soft polyethylene foam (Volara®)
Wider polyethylene behind display opening, narrower band holds display leaf only
Display page strapped with ‘hair silk’ and polyethylene
Display page strapped with ‘hair silk’ and polyethylene
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