

A critical survey of creative production in relation to the market potential of artists' books

This was a one-year AHRC supported survey project (30/05/04 – 30/05/05) to compare the different methods used by artists for creating and distributing their work; in order to offer advice to artists on how to market their work and build better relationships with potential purchasers.

Why we initiated this project

We knew that many artists (particularly those who were new to the field) have problems with pricing and marketing their work. We receive emails, letters and calls for help on a daily basis, from artists wanting advice on where they can exhibit and sell their work, and how to approach institutional and private collectors. This project was initiated to answer some of these questions in an accessible manner, which would help the artists, and enable us to direct them to information quickly. A year might seem like a long time to investigate these issues, but we knew that in order to conduct a proper investigation we would need to use a variety of methods to thoroughly ask and answer the questions. Our funding was only for travel and materials, and the project was run alongside other projects we were working on, which if anything aided our investigation through new contacts being brought into this study. We utilised a range of methods from an open response survey of the field, to interviews, case studies and data gathering, which we continually cross-referenced and added to as the project evolved. Our project resulted in the publication of a free download guidebook for book artists.

Our Research Questions were:

What is the relationship between the artist and purchaser within the field of artists' books, and how can it be improved?

Does this relationship offer the right opportunities for creative and marketing potential?

What is the role of the artist's book fair or specialist event for the artist's book?

Our Aims and Objectives were:

To compare the different methods used by artists for creating and distributing their work within the field of book arts.

To compare collection criteria and requirements of individuals and institutions, in order to establish some working guidelines for artists to use to approach them to market their work.

To undertake a survey of both exhibitors and purchasers at artist's book fairs and specialist events so we could establish the existing position of the market audience.

To interview a series of artists for production and marketing case studies which would contextualise our research and provide background information for newer artists and students.

To investigate if contemporary artist's book production and pricing structures reflected as standard across the field. To establish if there was a significant difference between artists pricing their work in different areas, or other influential market factors that the individual artist was unaware of. We hoped to establish a general pricing guide for artists as a result of the survey, which was achieved.

To make the results of our research project available to the widest possible audience. We did this by publishing the results of the survey as a free download guide for book artists, available from our website.

We announced the availability of the guide via book arts discussion lists, links on other book arts websites and on paper through our *Book Arts Newsletter*. We also take flyers with the download address on to any book fairs and events that we attend.

Research Context

As there are now many artists making books, the subject has grown in related disciplines in the fine, applied and graphic arts fields. There are specialist artist's book fairs and events in Europe and the USA and some specialist artist's book outlets where artists can show their work. We asked – How successful are these outlets for the artists who are working in this area and how do these events inform the dialogue between artist and purchaser?

There is a more direct link between the artist and the buyer in the field of artist's books than any other art discipline; artists' books are, by nature, hand-held artworks and their portable format allows the artist to self distribute.

As more artists are working within this field, would there now be more opportunities for them to establish a connection with collectors and purchasing institutions? How could artists and collectors benefit from this interaction?

To enable the field to extend its boundaries, we felt there needed to be a system in place where book artists could readily access the information they need, to distribute their work effectively to as wide an audience as possible.

Our Research Methods for this project

The survey

We began by reading all of the available published data: Stefan Szczelkun's *UK Artists Books: Marketing and Promotion* Estamp, London, 1993 and Simon Ford's *Artists' Books in UK and Eire Libraries* Estamp, London, 1992, were two useful studies published on the marketing and promotion of the artist's book in the UK. With the increased amount of study, interest in, and production of artists' books over recent years, we felt that a contemporary survey would help to identify opportunities and strategies for book artists to market their work and establish connections with both private collectors and purchasing institutions.

We produced a series of survey forms for: artists, dealers, private and institutional collectors, lecturers and book fair organisers. Respondents ranged from well established to new artists, curators, collectors (both institutional and private) bookshops, dealers, galleries, lecturers and instructors.

We asked both established and new artists to tell us about any issues concerning the production and marketing of their artists' books. This helped to establish a picture of the current situation, so we could try to address some of the problems experienced by book artists. We received c. 335 survey forms through our Internet response link on our website, 124 forms in the post and numerous email responses.

As we received the survey forms and messages, we compared the responses to our questions. These formed the basis for our investigation, to address and hopefully resolve the problems of the artists and purchasers.

Our survey was helped by our engagement in the field through our existing contacts with artists, collectors, librarians, curators and dealers. As we run many projects investigating artists' books, and edit and publish the *Artist's Book Yearbook* and the *Book Arts Newsletter*, we are in constant contact with practitioners, academics and purchasers. Those existing contacts of around 1300 people enabled us to announce our survey intentions to a wide international audience.

The survey forms were distributed:

At artist's book fairs we attended
Through our mailing list of 1300 people
Via the Internet for email return from a link on our website's project page. The use of the Internet was essential as part of this project, as we have many visitors to our website who we do not have on our mailing list. This enabled us to reach a global audience, and we received many responses via the download forms and email links.

The survey compared methods used by book artists for producing and distributing their work, and considered the importance of building relationships with purchasers and with other artists. We wanted

to find out if there were any problems or improvements that could be made in dealing with purchasers of their work.

The questions we asked artists were:

1. What do you feel is the most rewarding aspect of the personal interaction you have with any potential purchasers of your books?
2. What do you feel is the least rewarding aspect of this interaction?
3. Would you prefer to sell your books yourself, or through an intermediary?
4. Do you feel that meeting the people who purchase your work influences your creative production in any way?
5. Has meeting potential purchasers or collectors given you any opportunities you may not have had otherwise, such as exhibitions etc.?
6. How important do you think the role of the artist's book fair or specialist event is and do these events impact on your output?
7. Are your books mainly: large editions? unique book works?
8. Have you formulated your own pricing structure for your editions? Is it the same for each edition or do you price them differently?
9. Have you directly approached collections to sell your own work by: Letter? Phone? Email? In Person? Was your contact successful? If not, do you know why it was not successful?
10. Did you know much about the collection before you approached them i.e. any specialist interests?
11. Did you have a contact name?
12. Do you have an idea of how many artists approach the collection each year?
13. What do you think the most helpful advice you could receive about approaching collections would be?
14. Are there any other aspects of marketing your own work that you would like to improve or know more about?
15. Are there any other issues regarding this survey that you would like to see addressed?

The questions we asked institutional and private collectors were:

1. How would you prefer to be approached by an artist wishing to sell their work to you?
2. In your opinion, what would be the worst way of approaching you?
3. Does your collection have any particular theme or specialist aspect?
 - 3a. How can artists find out about your preferences?
4. Do you feel it is necessary to meet the artist where possible? If yes, why?
5. Do you purchase from artists at specialist artist's book fairs?
6. Where (or who) is your main source of purchasing artists' books for your collection?
7. Do you have any issues arising from cataloguing or archiving artists' books you have purchased? If so, is there any information from the artist that would make your job easier? (for example, if the artist provided an information sheet for you).

8. Is there any aspect of your interaction with artists selling their work to you that you would like to improve upon?

9. Any other issues regarding this survey that you would like to see addressed?

Many artists listed the same or very similar problems:

How to calculate pricing structures

How to find out where to sell their work

Working out which events/fairs were the most useful for making connections and sales

Could they cover the costs of exhibiting at book fairs

Approaches to collections with no response or sales

The difficulty of establishing a relationship with potential collectors

How to approach bookshops and dealers, or should they sell directly to purchasers

Not knowing how to best represent themselves, or the kind of approach collectors wanted from them

Not knowing which information to provide to collectors – particularly in institutions

Whether they should be using ISBNs or not

Collectors problems were mainly:

Artists approaching them when they were busy, or turning up without making an appointment

Artists expecting them to buy work which was unsuitable for their collection

Not being provided with documentation on artworks, and for institutions; the cataloguing difficulties as a result of this lack of information

unsolicited books arriving in the post, and the costs of returning them to the artists

Finding out about artists whose work would be of interest

Spreading their acquisition budgets to buy books when they only have funds for a set period

The expense of unique works – sometimes more than an annual purchasing budget

A lack of specialist venues to purchase works

Artists using unstable materials/potential degradation of artworks in the future

We felt that we should also interview some artists, dealers and purchasers to give an in depth series of accounts of their experiences, which would give artists and collectors an idea of how they each worked with the situation. We had applied for travel money in the grant application, as we thought the best way to gauge the situation was to interview people in their practicing environment. We attend the main artists' books events throughout the year in the UK, but with extra travel funding we were able to also visit two abroad to see how artists and purchasers worked with this situation in another area and whether they had a better experience.

We subsequently surveyed exhibitors and purchasers at the following artist's book fairs:

Small Publishers' Fair, Conway Hall, London, October 2004

Pyramid Atlantic Artist's Book Fair and Conference, Washington, USA, November 2004

London Artist's Book Fair (LAB 04), ICA, London, November 2004

8th Contemporary Artist's Book Fair, Dean Clough Galleries, Halifax, March 2005

2nd International Artist's Book Fair, COEX Hall, Seoul, Republic of Korea, June 2005

Attending these events over the one-year research project period, allowed us to conduct a series of in situ interviews and evaluations with a range of artists, purchasers and collectors from the following countries: UK, EIRE, France, Russia, Republic of Korea, Canada, Germany, Italy, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand, Japan, The Netherlands, South Africa and the USA. The difference in artists' and collectors' experiences in these countries provided an extra dimension to the survey.

We also interviewed some organisers of book fairs; these are the questions we asked:

1. How many exhibitors do you have on average at your fair?
2. How long has your fair been running?
3. Do you have more artists interested in showing at each successive fair?
4. How do artists find out about your events?
5. What do you feel is the most positive aspect of these events?

6. What do you feel is the least positive aspect?
7. Do you have any specific criteria that exhibitors must meet in order to have a stand at your event?
8. Is there any aspect of your interaction with artists selling their work at your events that you would like to improve upon?
9. Any other issues regarding this survey that you would like to see addressed?

The responses from these interviews helped to give a wider picture for the attending artists, some organisers did have specific criteria, or organised fairs which were by invitation only, or required membership of an association. These may seem like simple things but they were not readily publicised; some artists had applied to exhibit but had been turned down without knowing why. Some fairs just required the artist to join an organisation for a small annual fee; for example the Fine Press Book Association organises fairs in the UK, which can be attended by members, all the artist needs to do is join the association for a fee of £25 a year. Gathering and disseminating this type of information was, we felt, going to be useful for artists to decide where and how to show their work.

The Case Studies

Using the issues raised from the survey forms as our focus we also interviewed 24 book artists to present a series of case studies of experiences in the UK, EIRE, France, Germany, Spain, Denmark and the USA. We interviewed artists at book fairs, and by email for the case studies.

The case studies provide a contextual element to be used as reference guides for newer artists and students wanting to find out more about the practicalities of producing and marketing artists' books. We selected a range of artists with 2 - 30+ years experience of making and marketing their books, zines and editions, and asked them to share their working practices and experiences of book fairs, interaction with collections and purchasers over a set period of one year, and discuss any problems encountered. We also asked them if there was any advice that would have helped them when they started out, which they would now offer to newer artists.

We also felt that interviewing established artists for most of the case studies would demonstrate examples of best practice for book artists. Including some newer artists would also allow other fledgling artists to see how they were coping in their practice.

These are the questions we asked for the artists' case study interviews.

They are similar to the artist survey forms, but provided more in-depth background questions with additional information to discuss some of the problems identified in the returned survey forms:

BACKGROUND:

How long have you been creating and marketing your own work? (If you have graduated college in an area relating to artists' books in the last 5 years please also state when you graduated)

Approximately how many editions have you published:
Since you started?
In the last 12 months?

Do you have your own imprint?

Is this your main source of income?

Please give a brief description of your artwork to date:

MARKETING AND PRODUCTION

What do you feel is the most difficult aspect of marketing your work has been?

How many artist's book fairs have you attended in the last 12 months?

Do you find that book fairs and personal interaction with potential purchasers are the best way to sell your work?

Do you find this a positive experience or do you prefer to sell through an intermediary? Please also tell us why

Do you feel that meeting the people who purchase your work influences your creative production in any way?

Has meeting potential purchasers or collectors given you any opportunities you may not have had otherwise, such as exhibitions etc.?

Is there any advice you feel would have really helped you when you first started out?

How do you find out about ways to market your work?

Are your books mainly: large editions? OR unique book works?

Have you formulated your own pricing structure for your editions? We are trying to establish if there is a significant similarity or difference between artists pricing their work in different formats, or identify other influential market factors that some individuals may be unaware of. Would you be willing to quantify how you work out your selling price?

Is it the same for each edition or do you price them differently?

Have you directly approached collections to sell your own work by: Letter? Phone? Email? In Person?

Was your contact successful?

If not, do you know why it was not successful?

Did you know much about the first collection you sold to before you approached them i.e. any specialist interests?

Did you have a contact name?

Do you keep collectors up to date with information on your new publications?

Are there any other aspects of marketing your own work that you would like to improve or know more about, or are there any opportunities you think should be more available?

Are there any other issues regarding this survey that you would like to see addressed?

Each of the artists we interviewed gave an in depth response to our questions. It was clear that even established artists with over 25 years of experience still had problems marketing their work to institutional and private collectors. Some excerpts from their responses:

Marshall Weber (USA) is a founding member of the Booklyn collective in New York, an organisation of over 50 book artists. He has been making artists' books for 30 years and has published 40 editions, with 8 produced in the 12 months of the survey. This is his main source of income.

Weber's main difficulties with marketing were that "Collections do not collect comprehensively or consistently; internalised self-censorship can limit the collecting of radical, political or sexual subject matter."

Weber has approached collections by many means and his contacts are usually successful. He always makes sure he knows about the collection and has a contact name before approaching them, but has had some unsuccessful experiences when: "they did not personally want the work, they could not afford the work, the work was not appropriate for their collection, they had had a bad day that day, they were pissed at me for dissing them in the past, someone else sold them the work before I got

there, I was too pushy, I was not pushy enough, their Saturn was rising in their retrograde moon house, somebody told them I was a creep, the work fell apart in their hands, there was a fire in the library– (this really happened!).”

John Bently (UK) has been publishing his work under the *Liver & Lights Scriptorium* and *Kind Red Spirit* imprints since the early 70s. He has published c. 50 editions, including 34 editions of *Liver and Lights* since 1984, and 2 editions within the 12 months of the survey. His work includes both unique books and large editions. He was one of the founding editors – with Stephanie Brown, Tanya Peixoto and Stefan Szczelkun – in 1994, of the *Artist’s Book Yearbook*.

On marketing work his advice was: “you have got to be out there and not sit at home pining about that lucky break you never had... I’m a believer in you’ve got to make it happen. Get out of bed and believe in what you do with as much passion as you put in to making it. It all comes down to belief in the end.” “Don’t be afraid to try anything. Take methods from unrelated areas... like... how do small theatre companies market themselves? ... how do bands?... how do the big publishers do it... take from them all and use what works. ... when I started there was no internet... nobody owned a computer... so things have changed drastically since then. Try everything, steal methods from unrelated areas...”

“I think my strategy is very personal to me and I think that’s what every artist needs to develop... don’t be impatient, try things out and don’t be shy. Don’t (big mistake) think that only ‘arty’ people will buy your books. Books are books. Everybody has books. I think the word ‘artists’, for most ordinary people, in front of the word ‘book’ is a bit of a marketing no–no personally. If you don’t believe me... try it (particularly if you approach distributors).”

Helen Douglas (UK) has been making artists’ books since 1972, publishing with Telfer Stokes under the *Weproductions* imprint. She had produced over 26 editions to date during the survey. This is not her main source of income, and she also uses income generated from sales of her books to pay for new publications.

“Weproductions publications are characterised by unlimited, paperback format and offset printing. The publications demonstrate an exploration of the book form and structure, visual conjunctions, sequence and narrative. We have always tried to make books that sell at a reasonable price. Production costs are a definite consideration in the making of work, but not to stifle an idea. When a book is made and bound, there is in its handling a suggestion of where its price should fall within our price range of £6–25.”

Weproductions has a number of set pricings, 7, 12, 15, 20 and 25 pounds. Much of their trade is through bookshops, their website and artist’s book fairs. They do sell through dealers as long as they are genuinely keen on the work and have found that “Over the years it has become evident when there is an enthused bookshop operator or seller, sales go up dramatically.”

«usus» Uta Schneider and Ulrike Stoltz (Germany)

Uta Schneider and Ulrike Stoltz have been making artists’ books since 1984, collaborating under the imprint *Unica T* from 1986–2001, and as «usus» from 2001. Their work consists of “bookworks, small editions and one-offs, all printing techniques available to us (mainly letterpress and digital) plus drawings, installations and music. They each have additional careers in this field (Uta Schneider: managing director of Stiftung Buchkunst; Ulrike Stoltz: professor for typography)

On any advice that would have helped when they first started out: “Well, 20 years ago making artists’ books, or starting to make them, was like an expedition into an unknown territory! We went to the International Frankfurt Book Fair with the idea that someone would publish our books – and had to learn that we would have to be our own publishers. That’s where we learned most (from customers and collectors as well as from colleagues).”

“We would like to know whether it is actually possible to make a living just from artists’ books. We doubt it. Most people we know make books PLUS something else: like other art work, printing for other people, graphic design, teaching, taxi driving, etc. or they have another type of income, like renting a house/apartment they own to someone else; or living from their husband’s or wife’s income, or having inherited enough money from their parents... so it would be interesting to know.”

The case studies provided a wealth of examples of production and sales, with the artists generously offering advice to newer artists on some of their best and worst experiences and some really useful tips for marketing and promotion of their work. We felt that including these experiences would give some inspiration to artists to get out there and start selling their artwork.

On completion of the case studies, we then attempted to address the other problems, such as the lack of readily available information for book artists on:

ISBNs

Approaching collectors and establishing a relationship between artist and purchaser

Bookshops and dealers

Pricing work

Where or how to find out about available opportunities, marketing ideas and supporting networks

Is it useful to give your artist's book an ISBN?

Many artists were really confused about this. Some thought that they should be applying ISBNs to their books even when making small editions, which could have costly and disastrous results. We knew from our experience in publishing reference books, how to apply for an ISBN and what this entailed, so we included as much information as we could in the resulting guide.

What many new artists had not realised is that ISBN's are useful only for commercial artist's book sales of larger editions (we would advise a minimum of 50), which enables you to be identified and contacted for ordering purposes, as the publisher of the book for distribution and sales.

What many of them had not realised is that apart from the expense – the UK publishers' registration fee at the time of our publication was £77.50 (in July 2005) plus a block of 10 ISBN's at £67.50 – that publishing a book with an ISBN triggers legal deposit claims – (from the British Library etc.) for 6 copies of the edition – unpaid.

So, some artists had lost substantial amounts of money when they applied ISBNs to small editions, thinking that they needed them to sell their work.

If they are distributing a small edition and selling mainly at book fairs they don't need to pay for any ISBNs, as they are unnecessary.

Establishing a better relationship with purchasers of artists' books

We asked collectors to tell us about the ways in which they would prefer to interact with artists selling their books and any issues arising from collecting artists' books, we also asked them to tell us their main sources for purchasing artists' books for their collections.

Both institutional and private collectors make a substantial amount of purchasing through artist's book fairs, dealers, collectives and specialist bookshops. They also deal with artists directly, if a proper appointment to visit or send work on approval has been arranged.

Many of the artists were unsure of how to approach a potential collector. Private and public collections are an important source of income for book artists. As established artists had already told us in the case studies, this is not always an easy thing to do, and seems to have many degrees of success or failure.

We felt that there must be some answers to the problems artists and purchasers have with each other, if we could find out how it could work to the advantage of both, we could really make some progress.

We had interviewed collectors at book fairs and by email, and received survey forms from them. We found that although there were varying personal responses to how they preferred to engage with artists selling their work, there were common issues that could be readily addressed.

Acquisition policies

Collections do often have an acquisitions policy but these are not always readily available, and artists had difficulty finding out about them, or worse, had not considered that there might be a policy in place. This caused problems as artists could be approaching collections which their work was not suitable for, which is a waste of time and expense.

We therefore asked institutional collectors to tell us about their policies, and found out the following:

Many institutional collections only purchase books that relate to their teaching curriculum.

Many do not buy works over a certain amount of money, or under a certain edition number.

For example: Tate Library and Archive collects mostly larger editions and more inexpensive books. Tate has a written acquisitions policy and price limits. Artists can email for a copy of the acquisitions policy, so that they can see if it is worth approaching them to sell their work or not.

Approaching collectors

As part of the survey, we asked both institutional and private collectors:

1. How would you prefer to be approached by an artist wishing to sell their work to you?
2. In your opinion, what would be the worst way of approaching you?

There were varying responses to this question; which ranged enough in opinion for us to say that there is no definitive set of rules for approaching institutional collectors. Some curators favoured an initial phone call request to set up a meeting (as they know that letters and brochures can get buried under paperwork) but some have said that constant phone interruptions are the last thing they want when they are trying to work.

Two things we did establish, which we were told as a result of it happening regularly to collectors, were:

A personal appearance without an appointment is not the way to approach any collection. Unsolicited works sent on approval in the mail are annoying, and expensive to return!

What many artists had also not realised is that institutions have a budgetary year the same as any business does, so they may not be able to purchase work because they have already allocated the financial year's budget, which can vary from April – April for State collections and Autumn – June for educational collections.

Some institutions gave us their budget timetables to include in the guide, which is really useful for artists to know as they can then approach them when they have money available for purchasing.

As many collections have a good Internet presence, with information on their specialisms and contact addresses, we amassed as much information on them as we could find, to publish in the guide.

We made a list of collections which could be approached, and have since had more information emailed to us by artists using the guide, as they had found new collections which we could add.

We also asked private collectors for their views, through survey forms and through two case study interviews.

One thing that private collectors want is documentation and further contact. Documentation was one of the key issues raised by all collectors.

As part of the survey, we asked both private and institutional collectors:

Do you have any issues arising from cataloguing or archiving artists' books you have purchased? If so, is there any information from the artist that would make your job easier? (for example, if the artist provided an information sheet for you).

The majority of buyers, both institutional and private, wanted to receive documentation on any artist's book they purchased, but were often not given this. We studied the data we had gathered on their requirements, and then together a template for a documentation sheet which artists could use to supply information with their books when purchased. Some institutions provide a sheet for artists to fill in when they purchase work, but not all, so we felt that if artists could supply this information themselves, their work would be more easily accounted for.

Having received the same responses from dealers on the lack of information provided, we felt that the template would prove useful for sales through galleries and bookshops too.

Many of the artists books purchased around the world are for library collections, which means that they need to be catalogued properly for access. We found that many artists had not considered this, which was frustrating for the people who had the job of cataloguing their work. For example, a response from

Jae Jennifer Rossman, Special Collections Librarian & Curator, Arts of the Book Collection, Arts Library, Yale University, USA "An information sheet would be so helpful. Preferably one that hits all the major components of a bibliographic record: author(s)/artist(s); official title; place of publication; publisher; date of publication; materials; subject. This would also be very helpful in that it can take a long time for the materials to be catalogued as they often require original cataloguing. In the meantime, they are represented in the library's online catalog with a "preliminary record" which our support staff puts together from what they can glean from the book. An information sheet would allow us to create an improved preliminary record and thus improve access to the materials while they are waiting for full cataloging."

Bookshops and dealers

Many artists cited the same problems with approaching dealers, as they had with collections: who and where? We had a certain advantage to answering these as we publish the *Artist's Book Yearbook* and the *Book Arts Newsletter*, and have regular contact with galleries, dealers and bookshops – which are included in our listings sections, and who email news to us for the newsletter. Rather than assume that artists would know all of this information from our existing sources, we felt that we should combine the data we had, and any more that we could find out about, to make a new resource list of places to sell artists books. We worked through and updated our existing data, searched the Internet and asked artists and purchasers to email information to us. This meant that we were able to publish an up to date list of places for them to sell their work.

Pricing work

This was the inevitable 'how long is a piece of string?' question. There are so many factors involved in working out a price for artists' books. The main differences were between those who factored their time into the total cost and those who didn't. Many artists felt that including the cost of preparation time would price the work out of all proportion.

Some of the artists surveyed also made unique books, and the prices of these obviously differed from larger editions. These are produced as stand-alone pieces, or as part of a larger installation. Pricing of unique books did not arise as an issue, artists are confident in pricing items they consider as one-offs and therefore comparable to the price of a painting or sculpture.

With distribution of ideas in mind, many artists were keen to keep their editioned book prices around the same as standard book prices.

Many artists, not only recent graduates or newer book artists were unsure of strategies for pricing their work, so we asked all of the artists we surveyed, if they were willing to tell us how they worked out the price of their work. We compared all of their answers, although, many had no real answer as this was one of the main things that they had a problem formulating a working strategy for. The more established artists had ideas and methods, and more specifically the case study artists provided valuable responses to the questions we had asked them about this.

From the responses gathered and from our own working practice we managed to formulate some basic strategies for pricing work. The resulting factors in the pricing equation were:

Materials + cost of time spent producing the edition per hour (divided by no. of books in the edition) + a retail mark up. Plus – for sales through bookshops, dealers and galleries, they will take up to c.40–50% of the retail price.

Set a retail price that stays the same wherever the book is (many collectors expressed frustration at the varying prices of the same artist's book in different venues, particularly in different countries).

Using the Internet was recommended by artists who look at other artists websites who have prices for ordering online, and of course, visits to book fairs and see other artists' work and prices.

Where or how to find out about available opportunities, marketing ideas and supporting networks

Although artists' books fairs are still the main place for artists to sell their work and meet other artists for support and advice, felt that there were many opportunities available to them that artists simply didn't have the time to find out about. We gathered and considered every source we could find – as an ongoing part of our study over the year – for book artists to find out more information about making and marketing their work and to connect with other book artists.

We compiled this information from: the survey, our existing records from the ABYB and Book Arts Newsletter, from Internet searches, book fairs, catalogues, journal and publications searches, online groups, collectives, conferences and symposia, book arts websites and discussion lists.

After the project year had ended it took one month to write the guidebook, as a series of chapters of responses to the issues raised:

- Establishing a relationship between artist and purchaser of artists' books
- Collections and collectors
- Acquisition policies
- Approaching collections
- Supplying information to collections and purchasers
- Approaching bookshops and dealers
- ISBNs
- Pricing your work
- The role of the artist's book fair for marketing and networking
- Utilising the Internet
- Collectors and dealers case studies
- 24 Artists' Case Studies

The data gathered over the year was edited and compiled as reference sections in the guidebook on:

- Artist's book fairs and events, UK and international venues with dates and contacts
- Websites for information and marketing
- Bookshops, dealers and galleries specialising in artists' books
- Catalogues, journals and reference books on artists' books, including free downloads
- A list of collections
- Online discussions groups, societies, collectives, artist groups and other supporting organisations

The guidebook was published in July 2005 as a free download available from our bookarts website. The responses received have been the most rewarding part of this project; we have had emails and letters from around the world, from artists and collectors and even better from lecturers as far afield as Australia, South Africa and the USA to tell us that they are using the guide in their teaching modules.

As time passes, we are still receiving messages from people who have just discovered it, asking if they can share their responses and ideas, so we decided that we would not just stop at publishing the guidebook once. We will update it on a bi-annual basis (starting this June) and have announced an appeal for any information or experiences, which artists or collectors want to share. Luckily, last summer, ARLIS/UK & Ireland managed to solve any institutional collectors' problems of cataloguing by publishing *Artists' books: A Cataloguers' Manual*, compiled by Maria White, Patrick Perratt and Liz Lawes, as a guidebook for library cataloguing staff, which means that artists and collectors now have a complete guide to refer to for documenting artists' books for collections.

We will update the existing case studies to catch up with the artists' developments over the last 19 months, and have made contact with some new artists and collectors to share their experiences in six other countries for a supplementary series of case studies. Unwittingly, we have not so much completed a research project – but have set up an ongoing facility for artists to share and build upon.

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