



made up and stitched by hand, on demand. Another example, when I print using a vintage platen press I may use commercially made plates which I have previously designed in Quark®. Less successful (and frustrating) is inkjet printing on the occasions when the quality or colour is unreliable.

My production methods would be different if I could spend thousands on better, newer, more expensive equipment and a bigger space for working and storing paper, books and tools. Students are reluctant to make more than one copy of books that require a large amount of time, effort, or money. Therefore even small editions involve compromises over paper, archival quality, structural complexity and technique.

New technologies provide a resource for doing background research for my books and also looking at other artists' work and methods. I have considered collaborative projects using webcams, Skype, email and blogs. Mature students are using new technology to extend and support traditional skills. They can do things that were previously impossible. This is exciting and changes their whole outlook to the creative process. It is interesting that the opposite applies for younger students who have grown up with new technology and who may turn to traditional skills later to expand their creative repertoire.

### **Marketing and Distribution**

I sell my artists' books through Artist's Book Fairs, Exhibitions, specialist shops, websites, ABYB. I have used the Internet to sell my work via Amazon link-ins. Students have also sold their works at exhibitions, Artists' Book Fairs and local shops, and used their own websites and gallery websites.

A student who made an edition of concertinas from a single etched plate remarked that the work would be easier to show and would sell more easily and at a much higher price when flattened out and framed.

### **Teaching History and Theory**

I teach Book Arts at Westhope Craft College in Shropshire (internal certification is offered) and Summer Workshops at the Sidney Nolan Trust, Presteigne and elsewhere. Each module at Westhope is the equivalent of 4 days 'Structure', 'Image', 'Text', 'The Whole Book'

Students have purchased or read parts of:  
*The Century of Artist's Books*, Johanna Drucker  
*Creating Artist's Books*, Sarah Bodman

*Text in the Book Format*, Keith Smith  
*Non-adhesive Bindings, 1-4* Keith Smith  
UWE's *Book Arts Newsletter*

They are encouraged to research and discuss: ancient books and scripts; illuminated manuscripts; traditional and modern book production; Blake; Morris; livres d'artistes; avant-garde movements, artists and writers; the emergence of the artist's book 60s onwards and artist's books of practising artists.

When looking at artists' books in exhibitions or online, they are enthusiastic about highly sculptural work such as Su Blackwell, Susan Porteous, Brian Dettmer. However, their own books are usually hand-held and influenced by a wide range of artists and styles.

### **The Future of the Book**

*Do you think there is any limit to the definition of an artist's book?*

Yes, but luckily artists usually ignore limits.

I would define an artist's book as an artwork which:  
is in the form of a book  
and/or  
refers to 'the book'  
and/or  
includes elements of 'book' (sequence, narrative, text, pages ...)

The horizon of the book is expanding.  
As long as there is a market for traditionally produced books, the skills will survive to a certain extent.

It is possible that as new technologies become commonplace, both artists and their audience will turn to dying skills with renewed interest. There is already a rising interest in artisan skills such as letterpress.

This case study forms part of the Centre for Fine Print Research's AHRC funded project 2008 - 2010: *What will be the canon for the artist's book in the 21st Century (In an arena that now includes both digital and traditionally produced artists' books, what will constitute the concepts of artists' publishing in the future?)* <http://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/canon.htm>