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planning of the page layout within my work, and I no longer hand-draw the forms to be cut; I either ink-jet print initial imagery directly onto the pages (to be cut) or print the forms on separate sheets of paper.

Creative Practice

Methods of Production for artists' books include: Inkjet, Letterpress, Altered book, Sculptural book, Photocopy, Hand-drawn/Letraset, Cutting by hand

I could not do without my computer. I use it from the planning stage to the creation of the designs and in many cases I also print out the pages from it. I love my Mac.

ABTREE

With reference to the ABTREE [see version above], my work sits under Artists' Books - Handmade, Flip, Sculptural, Zines. Ephemeral – Badges, Postcards, Cards, Posters and Bookmarks. I feel like re-organising the diagram. I don't understand how production methods have relevance to whether or not a book is an artists' book and there are several other issues I don't agree with, or find odd.

I still hand-cut all my work, but am considering laser-cutting or dye-cutting in the future.

Technology and Tradition

With my very first edition of books, I drew forms by hand onto the pages, then hand-cut, page-by-page to create a sequential experience. The computer did not play an important role in the planning of the layout at all. However, this was soon to change and today – 10 years later – the computer plays a vital role in the

In relation to the quality of production: I have chosen to hand-cut all my work first of all because it gives me complete control of the outcome (no hassle as to what is technically possible). A craft knife and a cutting mat are relatively cheap and readily available, leaving only the major investment of lots of time – the alternative would be investing in expensive machinery myself, or paying others to cut my designs. Either of these choices is costly and represents a loss of my control of the process.

Furthermore, I also do all the bookbinding myself, again giving me control of the final outcome. To involve others may well result in work which strays from my objectives.

Only my skills and imagination set the limits of what can be done, which is normally good enough for me. So, yes, all in all I am very aware of issues of the

quality of production, and have stayed with what allows me most control, given that I cannot afford a standard of outside production that would meet my standards.



Ø (Island): 'Afgang/ Ankomst'
Mette-Sofie D. Ambeck, hand cut book (May 2009)

Do you think new technologies influence your creative process in any way? If so, how?

Yes. One example is the way I finalise designs; I used to draw everything by hand, so making small changes was a tedious process, now I make the initial idea by hand, scan it and then work on perfecting the design on the computer.

New available process like Print On-Demand have also made me think of how I could create new work which would involve this production format.

Google - and the Internet overall - is just a Godsend when researching for information for new work.

If my work was more text based and did not depend on the tactile quality of the page sequence and the mere physicality of the book format, I would consider publishing an artist's book on electronic paper if it seemed appropriate.

Marketing and Distribution

I sell the majority of my artists' books at Artists' Books Fairs. My target audience is the general public, private collectors and institutional collections – anyone interested. I have used the Internet to sell my work via my own website.

If the final outcome is not intended in any physical form, I believe it will be hard for bookshops/galleries to adapt to distributing books produced using just digital media unless they become better at integrating digital formats with their websites (with more than just links). Perhaps the work also will need more of a physical presence in the physical location by being

displayed on screens/monitors, to get audience interested. I am sure digital media will be collected, just not sure technically how it would work, but I am sure there will be techie-arty collectors out there and also institutional collections which will have to tailor their collection for this format.

The Future of the Book

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

Yes. An artist's book is a book produced by an artist, from idea to final production. If others have been involved, the artist should have worked closely to direct and oversee them, so that the final outcome is as the artist intended.

An equally important question, if not more so, is: 'How do I define a book?'

Through a lot of research I came to the conclusion in my MA thesis (2000) that three fundamental things define a book:

- pages
- binding
- movement

These three attributes are shared by a diversity of different books, whatever their content. Otherwise the object can be called by another name and is therefore no longer a book.

How pages, binding and movement are interpreted is another matter, and is not necessarily to be seen only as a traditional codex.

Do you have any concerns about the future of the book, for example the loss of traditional artisan skills?

Reference skills: No, some skills may or may not be lost, but others will develop and some may be revisited. Development is in our nature, we cannot stop it and we should not try to.

I have no concerns for the book as a format, it has developed over thousands of years and I hope it will continue to do so. New formats have been born, but they are not books. They have names of their own.

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>