

How to Book

SMALL EDITIONS

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Edited by Hanson Coleman, *Childish Books* & Hannah Pierce, *Small Editions*

This project went into production just as the COVID-19 pandemic began. We are especially grateful to all those who contributed their time and labor during such an uncertain moment. We also want to honor that many incredible voices in our community were impacted in ways that prevented them from participating. It has been a gift for us to feel connected in this collaborative project during a time of isolation. We thank you all.

Note from the Editors

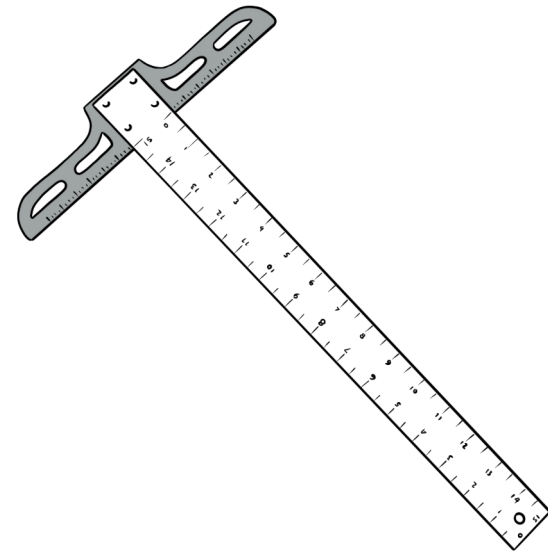
This zine is composed of contributions from 17 artists, collectives, gallerists, and publishers, all of whom make up our extended book community. By sourcing many voices, we hope to reflect how interconnected and supportive the indie artist publishing world is, and to further support this community. As we're a New York-based publisher, many, if not all of our contributors, resources and references are also New York-based. A more comprehensive second volume with more cities included is perhaps on the horizon...

There are a great many books about making books, and this one is by no means a replacement for them (in fact, we've included our favorite printing & bookbinding reads and resources within these pages). How to Book is the guide that we wish we had when we started making books—a guide that answered the questions we struggled to resolve and that shared crucial advice from folks who have a better lay of the land. Now in its fourth printing, it's been incredible to see how far this book has traveled, and the conversations it has inspired. We hope that this zine can be a useful tool to start or expand your publishing practice, and we look forward to one day geeking out over books together.

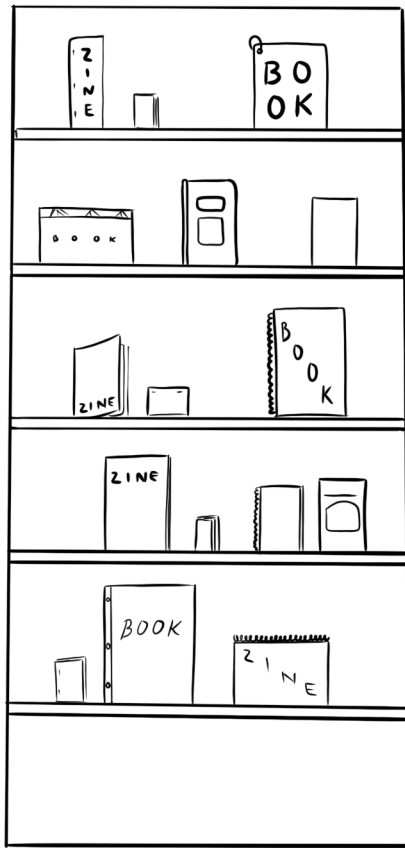
Hannah & Hanson

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Research



"I wish I had known to do more research before I began publishing. If I had read more magazines, studied their layouts, asked their founders questions, etc., I probably could've cut the development time by a lot for my projects. I also might have made fewer mistakes."

Nadya Agrawal, Kajal Magazine

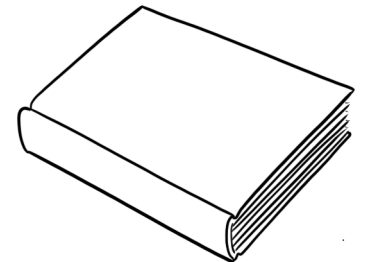
"Look at as many artist's books in as many forms as possible. It's important to build your visual, structural and material artist's book vocabulary so you are making the right choices for expression and production. Visit artist's book collections like at NYPL, talk to the librarians (they often know so much more about what is in the collection than you will find in the catalog), and try to get out of your comfort zone. Spend time with books. Really read and look carefully at them. Remember, people usually do judge books by their covers. Many artist's books you might be aware of now could be less interesting after you really read and look at them—you don't want to publish a book that's most interesting part is the cover."

Corina Reynolds, Center for Book Arts

"For me, it's not really about 'books'. It's about the content. I have found that developing content usually ends up guiding me to incorporate and invent different book structures and formats. I have been interested in a plethora of different topics which has also given me the opportunity to meet different kinds of people outside of artistic circles."

Tammy Nguyen, Passenger Pigeon Press

Like most creative projects, ideation for book projects can take many forms. Sometimes they're the result of a larger body of work or research. Sometimes they are a part of a collaborative process with other artists. More often than not, the form of a book is chosen as the best way of communicating an idea in a tactile way to an audience, transcending the white walls of a gallery or a glowing screen. But where do you start? Where can you draw inspiration from? How can you learn from artists and publishers that have come before you?



Where do you get inspiration for your book projects?

"Specialty libraries like the Center for Book Arts have an amazing wealth of books and can be great for discovering new ways of binding, page folding, printing, everything, as well as zine and artbook stores like Printed Matter or Desert Island." **Aysen Gerlach, POP 3**

"One thing that I always recommend people do, if they are looking to learn about artist publishers and get an understanding of the field, is to look up artist book fairs around the world. Go through their vendor lists and look at all of the exhibitor websites."

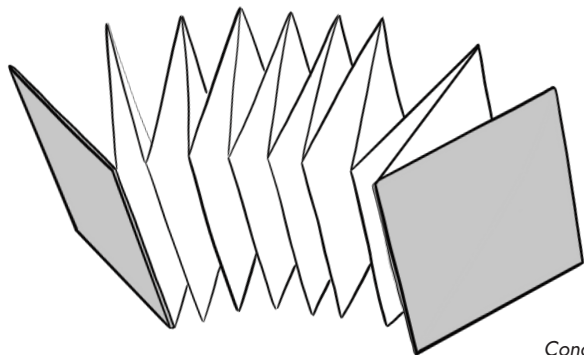
Paige Landesberg, Miriam Gallery

"My art practice usually inspires my book making. I often make zines at the very beginning or end of a larger project. They tend to function as a way of documenting the seed of an idea before I can expand and grow it. At the end of a project, they function as a memento or a way of circulating a project that exists in another more expanded, less portable format."

Shannon Finnegan, Artist

"Following independent publishers and artists on social media is a really easy way to get an instant boost of inspiration from wherever you are. By checking out your own cultural contemporaries you can better understand why and how people are making work right now."

Alex Barsky & Zack Lydon, Zine Hug



Concertina/Accordion Binding

How & where did you learn how to make books?

"The most effective way I've learned to make books is by doing it and fucking it up; the more you practice the better. Start making mockups or prototypes so you can have a better understanding of the steps and all the small details. Watching other people and YouTube tutorials also help; there is plenty of material out there."

Gonzalo Guerrero, Secret Riso Club



"I took a fantastic Risograph printing class from Gonzalo at Secret Riso Club (a Christmas gift from Irrelevant Press)! He walks you through the whole Risograph printing process from design through production."

Holly Meadows-Smith, Irrelevant Press

"Besides friends, my number one invaluable resource for sanity and survival: volunteering at Endless Editions. It was a great way to learn different methods to print, assemble, and bind books, and put in many hours practicing until the process was familiar."

Jia Sung, Artist

"All of the classes at the Center for Book Arts are A+! I can't emphasize how invaluable my time was there as a scholar. I took every class I could and the kind of technique combined with practice really gave me a new bookbinding muscle I could have never imagined."

Tammy Nguyen, Passenger Pigeon Press

"Something that really helped us was being part of the SVA RisoLAB community in New York. Everyone there is really helpful and excited to share all of the tips they pick up independently. Getting into some kind of printmaking or bookmaking studio is a really great way to pick up different ideas on how to make books and collaborating with others is the best way to grow new ideas."

Alex Barsky & Zack Lydon, Zine Hug

What are the best online resources to research books?

Printed Matter's Bulletin, Paige Landesberg, Miriam Gallery

Facebook groups for bookbinding and printmaking, Tammy Nguyen, Passenger Pigeon Press

The Queer Zine Archive Project, 8 Ball Community

Are.na, Holly Meadows-Smith, Irrelevant Press

More Research Reads & Resources:

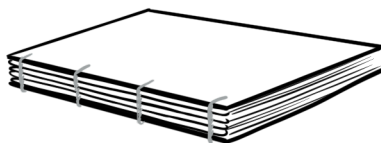
Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook, Joan Lyons

Journal of Artists Books (now out of circulation, check libraries)

Publishing As Artistic Practice, Edited by Annette Gilbert

The Book on Books on Artists Books, Arnaud Desjardin

The Century of Artists Books, Johanna Drucker



Exposed Spine/Coptic Binding

Funding

"There is no money in publishing. And there are many great people who publish."
8 Ball Community

"1. In 1974, artist's books cost roughly \$2.00 to \$100.00 in 2020 dollars.
2. If someone's book seems to cost a lot less than yours, ask them how they did it."
Corina Reynolds, Center for Book Arts

"I wish I had known that printing on nicer quality paper with riso or even inkjet is far more worth it than ordering many (hundreds) books in bulk from a printing service..."
Sarula Bao, Illustrator, SVA RisoLAB

"Thinking about the money management and business aspects of publishing is important. I think we started with the enthusiasm of beginners and that propelled us a long distance. Once we invested in a risograph printer, started publishing original works and larger editions, and started traveling for fairs, we had to factor in the costs more carefully, which has the ability to deflate you at times."
Alex Barsky & Zack Lydon, Zine Hug

"I really suggest a level of consistency with your work - using the same printers, making projects of the same size, determining the same print run - to manage the costs and make this feasible."
Nadya Agrawal, Kajal Magazine

"When I think about funding, I think about getting the project done, but I don't really think of funding for my art as a means for living. I don't think I would have started Passenger Pigeon Press without the stability of a good teaching job."
Tammy Nguyen, Passenger Pigeon Press

Depending on your existing resources, funding can often be the greatest hurdle to overcome in a book project. Many will tell you that there's no money in publishing, which is largely true, but these same people will tell you that they find a way to make their projects happen, one way or another. Sometimes it's a matter of leveraging what you already have—using a school or work printer, calling on friends to help collate and bind books, joining a work study or volunteer program. There's no one way to do it, and funding can align with your publishing goals. Do you just want to cover costs? Fund your next project? Make a living?



How do you price a book?

"Most artist's books are dramatically under-priced. Add up all the material, printing and binding costs, labor (often your own) and any payment due to artists, then divide by the edition number. If you plan on selling the book you should always multiply that by four to get the retail price. Remember that book stores and distributors take a huge cut of sales. It's important to support yourself and the artists you are working with otherwise you might find yourself subsidizing someone's private book collection."

Corina Reynolds, Center for Book Arts

"If you're working with consignment shops, you'll probably only be getting 50% of sales price, and for some wholesale distributors, you'll have to settle for 40% or less. With that in mind, production costs should ideally be less than 20% of sales price."

Orion Martin, Paradise Systems

"We recommend keeping in mind that the production costs are not only limited to the printing of the books. Printing proofs, shipping costs, attending fairs and events, travel costs associated with the distribution of the book, and the percentage retained by bookstores all add up."

Adriana Monsalve & Caterina Ragg, Homie House Press

"The 'actual value' of a book project is the total production costs plus the publisher paying themselves and any artists involved an equitable labor rate. So, pricing a book based on the actual value would make the cost per unit: the size of the edition divided by the full production costs plus labor costs. The 'perceived value' of a book project is what the general public believes the book is worth. For instance, a large format photo book's actual value / cost per unit may be \$40, and therefore the retail price based on the actual price would have to be \$90 for the publisher to make any profit. But the perceived value of the book is likely to be around \$45, because that's what the average person might think it should cost based on their prior understanding of books and aesthetics."

Often the actual value of an artist book is much greater than the public's perceived value. This means that publishers must often make a difficult decision of pricing their books based on making an equitable wage versus pricing the book to sell many copies quickly."

Paige Landesberg, Miriam Gallery

"It's always helpful to do some market research of similar projects/books."

Gonzalo Guerrero, Secret Riso Club

"If we are paying a printer to print and bind the books, we generally tack on about \$10 to the cost of producing one book (if it doesn't make the price too expensive, we try to stay under \$20-25 for a perfect bound book). For small zines, we keep the price within \$2-5, for larger zines we generally keep the price at \$10, and for full color larger zines (which are more expensive to print) we try to stay around \$15."

M. Kruchinskaya, Three Fifty

What are some good models to compensate artists you work with?

"I roll the fees for my artists into the price of the book and make that clear to all buyers. When they purchase one of our limited run magazines, they're directly paying the creators for their work."

Nadya Agrawal, Kajal Magazine

"Some friends just pay artists \$500-\$1000 outright and give them maybe 5-20 books. Others give a percentage of books/sales after costs are recouped, this is the most common version in indie publishing I think. At Endless we split everything down the center: 50% upfront costs, 50% labor, 50% edition. Most of the time we end up taking on 70-80% of the actual book making labor, but we try to keep things as equitable as possible. Sometimes we buy books back from artists, and sometimes artists buy books back from us. We usually ask what is the best situation for the artist, what their budget is, what they're trying to make, sometimes it's not a good fit and we try to point them in a better direction. We never want people walking away from a publishing project like they've gotten the short end of the stick; we're always trying to give more than we get."

Paul John, Endless Editions

"I do not believe in taking on any unpaid labor and refuse to perpetuate the unjust system of exploitation of labor. Currently GenderFail receives no funding outside of the sale of our publications, visiting artist fees and honorariums. For me publishing is truly personal and relies heavily on the sales of publications to pay my bills and sustain the project. Part of the failure of this project comes from the lack of outside funding, which pushes me to use whatever resources I have to realize the project. I believe in paying every artist that publishes with us, generally offering anywhere from 25-40% of the list price of most projects. Since we don't have funding we can only pay when the books that we publish sell. Most artists I work with make anywhere between \$500-\$1250 on average when publishing with us. I keep costs low by using a Risograph and trying not to spend over \$300 on paper costs for any edition. I am very proud to have paid out over \$6,000 to other artists in 2019 through sales of artists I published through GenderFail. I am very much interested in talking about the way small publishing is funded and sustained by being

transparent about financing projects. I believe that the lack of dialogue as to how we as artists and publishers make our money in the arts privileges those artists who come from economic stability. In this I recognize my whiteness, lower middle class position and cisgender passing (although it causes me gender dysphoria) are all privileges that have helped in my path to making and sustaining GenderFail."

Be Oakley, GenderFail

"If it's a small edition, and the product doesn't cost much, we often give out copies of the books. In some cases we take out the cost, and the remaining gets either split evenly, or all go to the artists, depending on the project. Sometimes we donate to a third party."

8 Ball Community

What are some successful ways you've been able to fund your projects?

"Grants! Look up whatever creative grants you can for this, at least for the beginning."

Nadya Agrawal, Kajal Magazine

"We have had success funding through crowdfunding, but our more preferred method of funding is resource sharing. Asking our communities for printer availability, especially if those printers are at someone's day job and we can use them for free. We have printed many editions of zines and books at various friends-of-friend's day jobs!"

M. Kruchinskaya, Three Fifty

"The Small Editions publishing model is funded by doing book production for others. Operating a studio to produce books on commission provides all the materials, tools and equipment needed to publish the books. At Center for Book Arts, books are funded through government grants as an extension of our exhibitions program. Without grant support it would be very hard for us to publish."

Corina Reynolds, Center for Book Arts

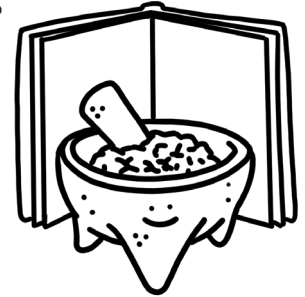
"Our platform has three distinctly different ways that you can collaborate with us as an artist. This makes it possible for us to meet you where you are, no matter where you may fall on the spectrum when it comes to budget. This keeps us accessible for everyone we wanna work with! Until we win a massive grant, we have to keep our business afloat somehow, and this is what we have found to be the most beautiful way that keeps us accessible for everyone we wanna work with!"

Adriana Monsalve & Caterina Ragg, Homie House Press

The Homie House Press Collaboration Breakdown:

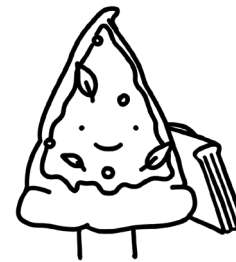
HOLY GUACAMOLE

- * Artist has the monetary capacities to pay for designing, narrating, producing, and publishing the project. They also have the capacities to pay for printing in full.
- * HHP + the artist decide how many copies of the publication HHP would like to distribute, and then purchase those copies from the artist at unit price (Unit price means the price you pay per copy from the printer).
- * HHP keeps 100% of the profits made from their distribution channels, and the artist keeps 100% of the profits made from theirs.



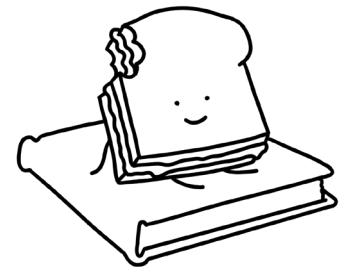
PERSONAL PIZZA

- * Artist has some monetary capacities to pay for designing, narrating, producing, and publishing the project. They also have some capacities to pay for printing.
- * HHP does the job to the best of their ability for a slightly lower rate. HHP also covers half of the printing costs, which means that the artist keeps half of the books and HHP keeps the other half. With this option, the division of books can change and fluctuate. It is not an exact science.
- * HHP keeps 100% of the profits made from their distribution channels, and the artist keeps 100% of the profits made from theirs.



PB&J

- * Artist has no monetary capacities to pay HHP for designing, narrating, producing, and publishing the project. They also have no capacities to pay for printing.
- * HHP takes on the job for free. If they agree to do this it can mean one of two things: you may be a student, and they see your work and value it greatly! or you may be an artist that just doesn't have the capital, and HHP highly values you and your hustle! HHP covers all printing costs and gifts 10 copies of the publication to the artist, and then allows the artist to purchase up to 30 copies at unit price.
- * HHP keeps 100% of the profits made from their distribution channels, and the artist keeps 100% of the profits made from theirs.



Production

"If you're making one of your first books, don't overthink it!! No idea is too small and no production is too simple as long as it communicates your idea in a way you're happy with."

Aysen Gerlach, POP 3

"Do one step at the time. Don't rush into trying to make the hard cover book of your career. Start small—small edition, small production, work with as few people as possible, you can always print more."

8 Ball Community

"I'd recommend going with the classic DIY staple-bound zine approach. They have long arm staplers at most FedExs if you're worried about that part! Use thicker paper for the cover to make it feel a little fancy. Don't make your zine too long (in terms of number of pages) because it won't fold nicely. For staple-bound zines, you should have a total page count that's divisible by four. I recommend you print in Adobe Acrobat and select the "Print Booklet" option, Adobe will impose the pages for you, so you don't have to do page-math in your head. If you can't do that, use imposeonline.com to get the pages in the right order for you!"

Holly Meadows-Smith, Irrelevant Press

"One thing we really advocate for is making a layout guide. That is putting all your spreads on a single page and timing out your book in that way much like you might a storyboard for animation. This becomes especially useful in longer projects."

M. Kruchinskaya, Three Fifty

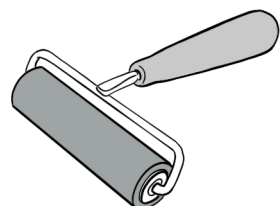
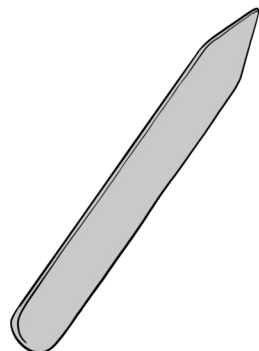
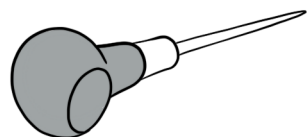
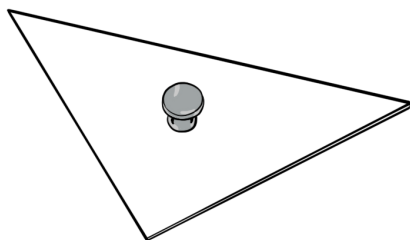
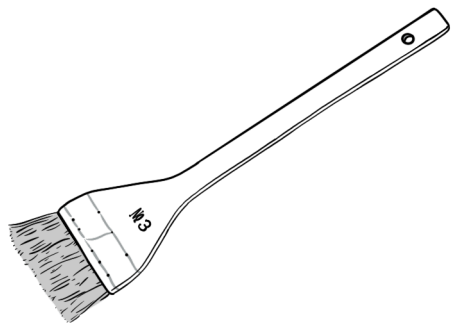
"Try not to get in a situation where you have to have a book out by a certain time. Finish the book at your own pace before you promise you will have it done for an event/opening/book fair. Remember this refrain and repeat it to yourself periodically: Self-imposed deadlines are not sustainable."

Orion Martin, Paradise Systems

Getting a book into production presents a series of logistical puzzles, from determining an edition size to sourcing materials and designing for print. Bookmaking often requires printing tests and binding mock-ups before the final product can come together. If you're still at a loss for how to start after consulting online and print resources, the book community is welcome to newcomers and full of great advice about how to produce books of varying complexity. When asking for help from other publishers, be considerate of their time and don't forget to pay it forward!

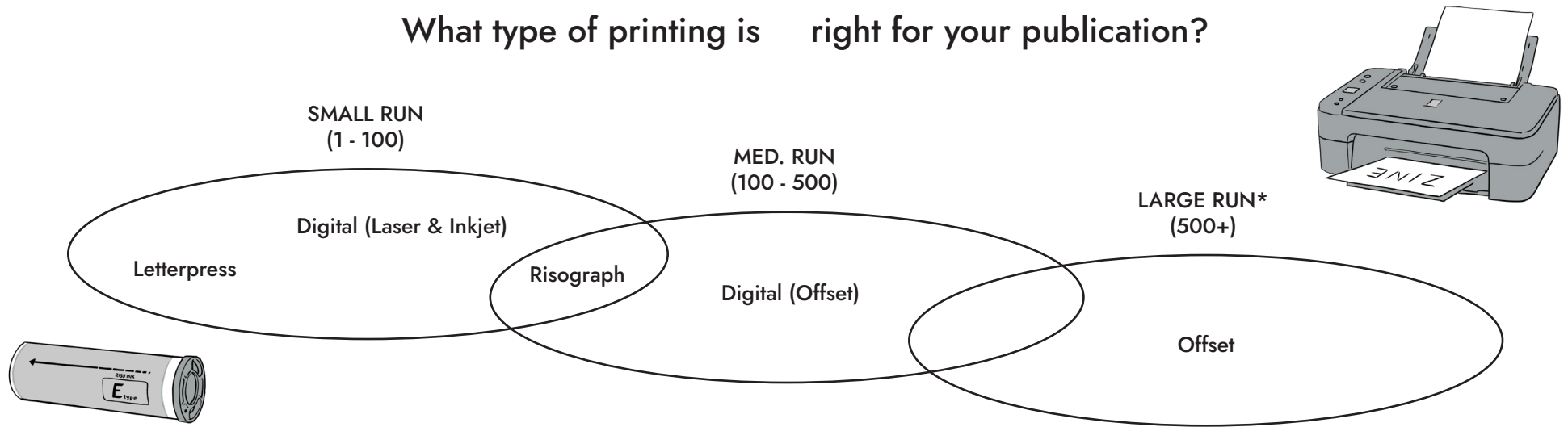


X-Acto Knife



Bookbinding tools, from top to bottom: hake brush, steel triangle, awl, bone folder, and brayer

What type of printing is right for your publication?



What is it?

Pros

Cons

Digital

Digital laser printing is a process that involves toner sitting on top of the piece of paper instead of being absorbed by it. This process uses a combination of Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black (CMYK) dots to create the image. Digital offset differs from laser by mimicking the results of offset printing using an electromagnetic charge to adhere toner to the paper.

- Great for small editions (under 50 copies)
- Good option for low to no budget printing
- Excellent results for black & white printing
- Can be done on school/office/home printers

- Not good for specialty colors
- Can be difficult to color calibrate printed colors to match screen colors
- Lines or streak may be present in saturated images when toner heads are out of alignment

Letterpress

Letterpress printing is a form of relief printing. Ink is applied to an image or text on a raised metal surface (similar to stamp). Paper is then rolled against the inked stamp to transfer the text or image.

- Creates unique works with visual depth and texture
- Great for individual prints, broadsides, single-sided pages or text-based prints

- Expensive to set up project: image/illustration stamp dies must be cut and type must be set-up, typically by hand
- Each color must be printed separately
- Need to do on a heavier weight paper
- Because of the impression into the page, not great for heavy two-sided printing

Risograph

A Risograph is a stencil duplicator machine. It thermographically imprints information onto a thin paper master, creating a screen. From that master you can print a high number of prints quickly and economically. Unlike silkscreening, it is difficult to mix your own inks, so you are somewhat limited to Riso's color options.

- Good for illustrative projects with saturated color and detailed graphic elements
- Economical for high volume, low page count projects
- Can often print up to 11x17"

- Each color must be done separately
- Not extremely clean/tight. Riso ink is soy based and never fully dries, it can smudge and offset to other books/pages. Registration can be finicky, good for projects that welcome a bit of mess/charm
- Can only print on uncoated surfaces between 20lb text to 120lb cardstock

Offset

Offset printing—also called offset lithography—is a process where information is inked to a metal printing plate, printed on a rubber cylinder and then transferred (i.e., offset) to paper or other material. Each color (CMYK and/or PMS) requires a plate to be made for each press sheet. Magazines, mass market books, and most packaging is printed via offset.

- Cost effective for very large runs
- Special custom inks such as metallic and Pantone spot colors (PMS) are available
- Can print on a huge variety of paper types
- Very large print sizes are possible

- Costly set-up, especially for full color
- Very costly to make changes once printed proofs are made, as a new plate needs to be manufactured

*For indie publishing—runs below 10,000 are considered "small" by most commercial printers

How do you choose a binding style, materials, or the run size?

"Seeing a matchbook sized book next to some giant hardcover shows you the infinite range that the medium of "book" has to offer."

Aysen Gerlach, POP 3

"Choose your paper right. Sometimes a little change of paper to the touch makes a big difference."

8 Ball Community

"Initially we were scared that nobody would buy our books, because nobody knew us. We printed 50 copies and they all sold out, so we had to print 100 more. Our advice would be to not underestimate your followers, but don't overestimate them either. We wouldn't recommend you to print 1000 copies if the artist doesn't already have a stable audience."

Adriana Monsalve & Caterina Ragg, Homie House Press



To outsource or to DIY?

"This decision always depends on what you are looking for and your budget. Producing a book in-house has its benefits, like lower cost and the ability to produce shorter runs, but you can be limited by the lack of access to materials or technical equipment needed to produce a high quality book in a more efficient way. If your goal is to make a more high-end book, it may be better to outsource just some of the steps (like printing or binding) or the entire project, depending on the timeline and budget."

Gonzalo Guerrero, Secret Riso Club

"It is intimidating to outsource a book sometimes because you generally have less control over printing/proofing and because of the upfront cost of production. I find it easier working with a small press or printshop over a print-on-demand service because you can have more quality control."

M. Kruchinskaya, Three Fifty

"If it's a short-run, budgets are tight, or if it uses non-standard printing/production methods we make it in house. For anything we produce, we're touching every page, hand-sewing or stapling, and waiting around for the printer to do its job. It's not always possible to do this—especially if someone wants 500 copies. Commercial printers are way cheaper when you print a lot but more expensive when you only want 25 copies or so, and a lot of folks we print/publish for can't afford investing a lot of money upfront."

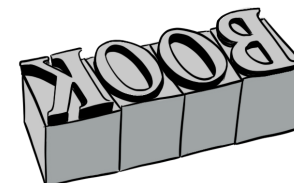
Holly Meadows-Smith, Irrelevant Press

"When I am planning a more 'fine craft' intensive artist book, one with all the bells and whistles of custom cloth, leather, hand-sewn end bands, set type, gilded edges, and/or marbled end pages, I plan and experiment with a different kind of logic and patience than I would with a democratic multiple. When I edition 200+ books, craft is still essential, but I think a lot about how to repeat folds, cuts, and other gestures in a consistent and efficient manner. I spend a lot of time creating jigs, which allow me to repeat measurements effortlessly."

Tammy Nguyen, Passenger Pigeon Press

"When you physically can't do it, you should hire someone who can."

Corina Reynolds, Center for Book Arts



Which binding style is right for your project?*

Saddle or Pamphlet Stitch

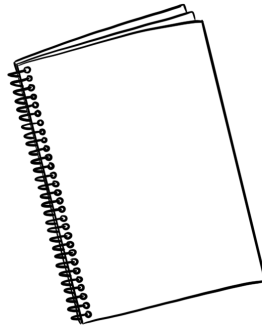
- 8 - 64** pages
- Folded sheets
- Lays flat when open
- Cheapest binding option

***or more, if the paper used is thin. Eventually sheet number gets too high for the fold to lay flat*



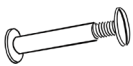
Spiral

- 8 - 250 pages
- Single sheets
- Lays flat when open

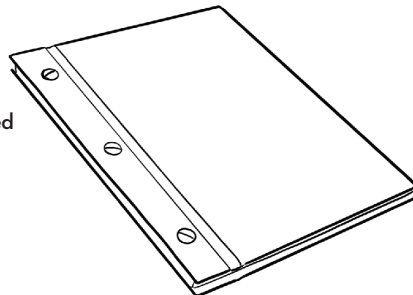


Screw-post or Chicago Screw

- 12 - 200 pages
- Single sheets
- Will not lay flat when open
- Large gutter
- Allows pages to be changed out or added over time

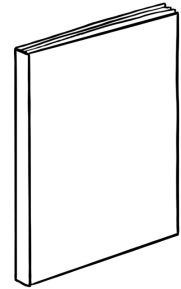


Screw Post



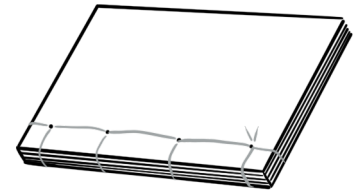
Perfect Binding

- 24 - 500 pages
- Single sheets
- Will not lay flat when open
- Cost efficient for books with high page counts



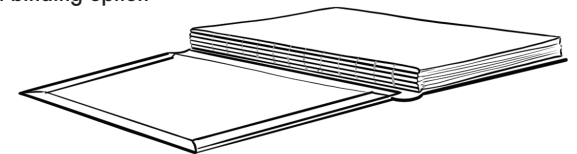
Japanese Stab Binding

- 20 - 200 pages
- Single sheets
- Will not lay flat when open
- Large gutter
- Must be done entirely by hand



Sewn Signature

- 32 - 500+ pages
- Folded sheets
- Lays flat when open
- Most expensive standard binding option



**These are just some of the most common binding styles. Other bindings tend to be variations on these forms. Check the resource list on p. 20 for more on binding structures!*

Glossary of

1/1, 4/4, 4/0, etc: Reference to the number of colors used on each side of a printed sheet of paper. 4/4 is CMYK/CMYK

Acid free: Paper without the chemical compound lignin, which means it will not yellow over time and is better for archival purposes

Bleed: Margin that goes beyond the trim size of a printing file, allowing for slight discrepancies in trimming without sacrificing an edge to edge image

Colophon: Text found at the end of a publication, relating information about the printing history and form of the book; often includes name of printer, type of paper, typeface, size of edition, date of printing, etc.

Deboss: Pressing a metal die into paper or board, leaving an impression

Dummy: Mock up of a book, with blank or printed pages; also called a maquette

Foil Stamp: Method of finishing where a heated die debosses material and releases foil from adhesive backing. Also called tooling when done by hand

Gutter: The inside margins nearest the binding edges

Grain Direction: The main direction that the fibers lie in a piece of paper. Grain long is parallel to the long dimension of the sheet, while grain short runs parallel to the short dimension

Imposition: The pre-press process of arranging pages on printing press sheets so they will appear in proper sequence after folding, trimming, and binding

Paper Weight: Measure of a paper stock's thickness, in grams per square meter (gsm) or pound (lb.)

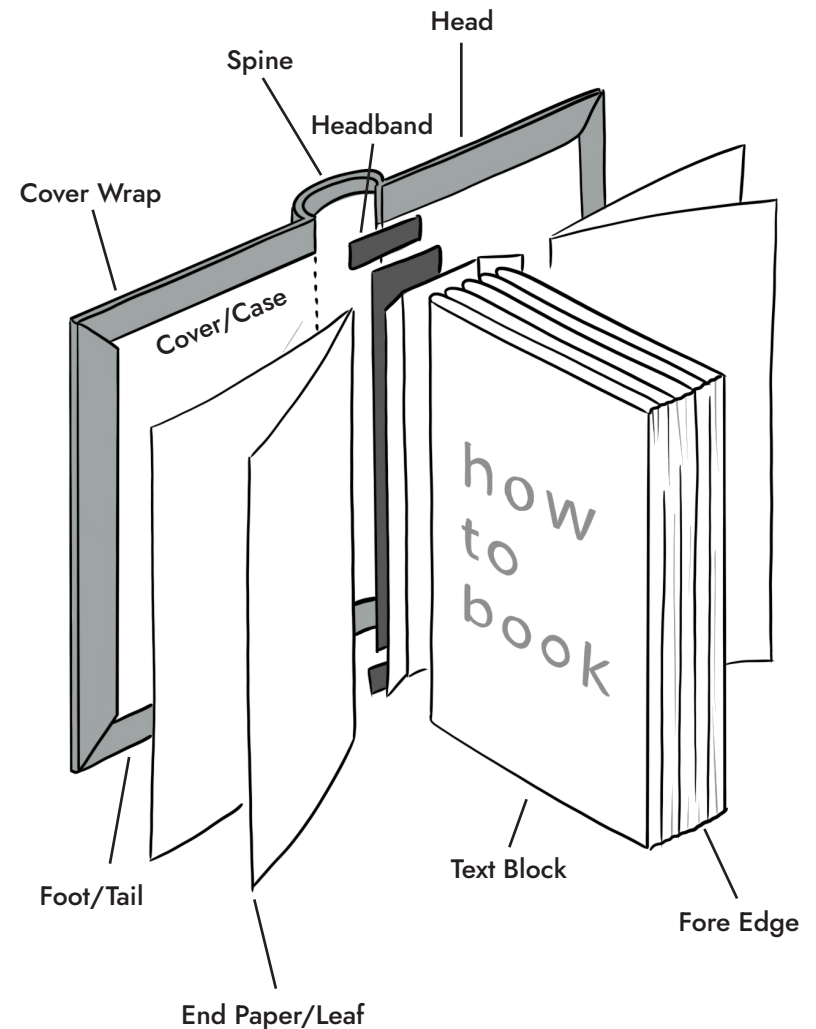
Shingling: In saddle-stitched books, the more sheets you nest into each other (i.e. the longer the book), the more the center sheets will stick out on the fore edge. This is also sometimes also called creep

Signature: Group of pages, printed on both sides of a single sheet of paper, that are folded, trimmed, and bound together (common abbr. sig.)

Tip-in: Page printed separately from the main text of the book and attached via adhesion onto the page behind it. Used for single specialty sheets like translucent pages

Tip-on: Sheet that is adhered into a debossed area, usually found on a book cover

Common Terms



More Printing & Bookbinding Resources:

Book Book, Hyon Myungah and Chang Yuchen

Bookbinding: A Comprehensive Guide to Folding, Sewing, and Binding, Franziska Morlok and Miriam Waszelewski

Bookbinding for Book Artists, Keith A. Smith

Bookforms: A Complete Guide to Designing and Crafting Handbound Books, Center for Book Arts

Hand Bookbinding: A Manual of Instruction, Aldren A. Watson

How to Make Books: Fold, Cut & Stitch Your Way to a One-of-a-Kind Book, Esther K. Smith

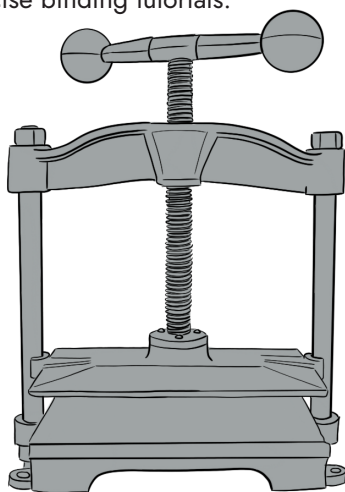
Pocket Pal: A Graphic Arts Production Handbook, International Paper

Real World Print Production with Adobe Creative Cloud, Claudia McCue

Reddit: [r/Bookbinding](#) and [r/BookBindingResource](#)

[www.stencil.wiki](#) for Risograph printing information

Youtube: For everything from a 3-hole pamphlet stitch to an overview of the offset lithography printing process. Sea Lemon is a great account to start with for clear and concise binding tutorials.



Nipping Press

Distribution

"Keep in mind that books don't sell themselves. There is a lot of promotional work that you have to be ready for; be ready to travel, attend fairs, and host book launches."

Adriana Monsalve & Caterina Ragg, Homie House Press

"To me, artist bookstores and permanent spaces dedicated to the sale of artist made books are essential, both for sustaining the newly realized potential for artist publishers to create books as a full time pursuit, and for the continued accessibility and wider spread of content."

Paige Landesberg, Miriam Gallery

"Zine fairs like NYABF, BKABF, CAB, and others are wonderful; you get to meet and interact with the people who are interested in your work and other creators. I've been fortunate enough to have my work represented in local Chinese-American businesses such as Wing On Wo & Co and Chop Suey Club, which is so meaningful to me as much of my work draws on Chinese myth and folklore. Being able to reach others who resonate with this material is part of why I continue to make it."

Jia Sung, Artist

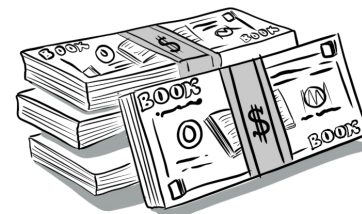
"If you have a social media presence, more people will have access to your books. Instagram is invaluable to sharing our work. What's the point of making stacks of books if no one reads them?"

Alex Barsky & Zack Lydon, Zine Hug

"There is an enormous difference between experiencing an artist book in a special collection, an exhibit, at a fair, or if it arrives in the mail. Each of these experiences come with unique potential and power."

Tammy Nguyen, Passenger Pigeon Press

Now that your book has been researched, printed, and bound, how will it be shared with the world? Book fairs, consignment in bookstores, and hosting online shops are the most common distribution methods used in independent publishing. Developing relationships with libraries can also provide another outlet to share the work with people long after it's out of stock at a bookstore. Determining the right distribution channels depends on the answers to the following questions: How does your audience buy/engage with books? And what is your personal bandwidth for distribution?



Would you recommend tabling fairs? What are your tips for participating?

"Zine and book fairs are the BEST place to distribute books because you get to spend time with other folks making publications and folks that want to give you money in exchange for your work. There are so many, especially in New York, it's such a treat. Brooklyn Art Book Fair is my favorite. Endless Editions does an incredible job curating the tables and an even better job making sure everyone is comfortable and happy during the event. Printed Matter's NY Art Book Fair is a good one for making money (although expensive to table, so try sharing a table with someone or having a distro table your stuff!). And on the west coast the East Bay Alternative Book and Zine Fest rocks and is filled with all the best people."

Holly Meadows-Smith, Irrelevant Press

"We loved going to MICE in Cambridge, MA and Short Run in Seattle, WA. Both shows had awesome crowds and really nice art communities that welcomed us warmly."

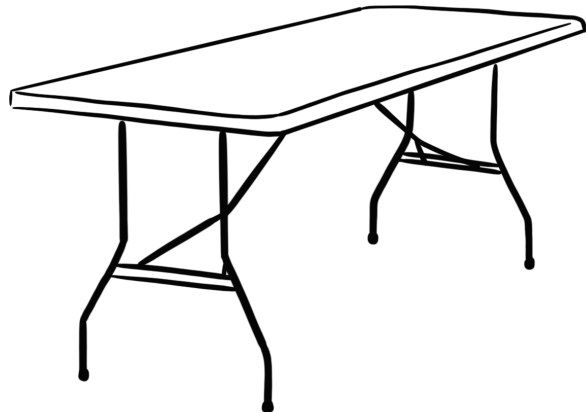
Alex Barsky & Zack Lydon, Zine Hug

"My favorite fair to sell at is NYABF! The crowd that attends are people that I generally find that my books are suited towards. Lots of people who are book enthusiasts and big art nerds that I usually have great conversations with. It can be really busy, but I enjoy being crowded if it's only for a couple of days."

Sarula Bao, Illustrator, SVA RisoLAB

"Printed Matter's NYABF is always good to have your name out there, but not very cheap to attend. Philadelphia has a good zine scene, and Chicago. In Tokyo there's a great book fair, also in Mexico City and São Paulo."

8 Ball Community



"Tabling is such an important aspect of the small publishing community when first starting out. Book fairs are not about making money but finding precious information, friendships and inspiration. That being said, remember that many of the publishers in attendance rely on this money to live. Some people think of publishing as a hobby, and for many others it's our livelihood. Fairs also can be very expensive, taxing and emotionally draining. As someone with anxiety and mental health issues I often leave fairs exhausted, and I frequently require time to recover after attending larger fairs. With GenderFail I attend fairs alone, so I strongly suggest having someone else with you. More importantly, in conversations with black and brown artists and publishers, many have told me that art book fairs can feel very alienating. A number of these spaces are very white and diversity is a huge problem, especially at larger book fairs. Non-white publishers have also expressed feeling unsupported and used. I feel that there is a lot of work that needs to be done to make publishers, especially publishers of color, to feel supported at these spaces and to think as much about the publisher's experience as about the social capital of these events. In this, it's important to continue to push these institutions to make sure publishers feel supported and not used."

Be Oakley, GenderFail

*"You have to talk to EVERYONE. Especially when you're starting out. Think of it as bartending, you have to *sell* the thing to the customer... Also you never know who you're gonna meet (could be a librarian from that museum where you want your books to live). Try not to have the attitude that these people are wasting your time. I always think about my favorite experiences as an attendee and try to replicate those."*

Paul John, Endless Editions

"We tend to prefer a smaller fests where we can spend a good amount of time talking to each person who stops at our table. Our main goal is connection and community building, so large, overstimulating fests can suck it!"

M. Kruchinskaya, Three Fifty

What are your thoughts about selling through a bookstore?

"The physical space of an artist bookstore has a relationship to a regular bookstore. This makes it familiar, and therefore gives everyday people (non-arts audiences) the permission to engage and explore, whereas in a gallery, everyone might not feel that same permission. One does not need to have any prior knowledge or interest in art in order to feel empowered to interact with the books on the shelves, move, speak and think freely in the environment. Additionally, artist book shops act as important sites for ongoing programming and collaboration to happen. Fairs, while important, only occur sporadically and can be taxing on participants in many ways. For bookmakers, having consistent wholesale accounts with many shops that they mail books to each month offers a source of income, stability, and allows for their work to become more broadly accessed."

Paige Landesberg, Miriam Gallery

"Our favorite shop to sell work in is Desert Island, who also hosts one of the best shows out there, Comic Arts Brooklyn. There is an eclectic collection of work in there and they give everyone a chance to sell their books."

Alex Barsky & Zack Lydon, Zine Hug

"Consignment through local bookstores is cute and I recommend it, but they're often bad about paying you back on time / at all because they're selling so many different books of all kinds. If you can, table events and host release parties. Collab with other folks so this kind of thing is easier! As a printer and publisher, we're always happy to distribute peoples' work we help produce if we like it!"

Holly Meadows-Smith, Irrelevant Press

"It's easy to become frustrated with consignment shops and distributors around payments timelines and lack of follow up, but remember that the person you're upset with is doing what they do because they love the community and want to support it."

Orion Martin, Paradise Systems



Some Favorite NY Bookstores:

Bluestockings Cooperative

Dashwood Books

Desert Island

Karma Bookstore

MAST Books

Miriam Gallery

Molasses Books

Printed Matter

Quimby's

Special Special

Spoonbill & Sugartown

Topos Bookstore

The Word is Change



Is an online store worth it? What are your tips for maintaining one?

"It's a lot of work to manage your own online shop and fulfillment but I think it's worth it if you have a small run. I recommend investing in a thermaprint shopping label printer and nice packaging. Also, do your research to determine the best shipping rates. Make a Ship Station and Big Cartel account and connect everything up with PayPal."

Nadya Agrawal, Kajal Magazine

"Be sure you have nice a set of photos and a good description of the books."
Gonzalo Guerrero, Secret Riso Club

"My online shop is an important source of semi-passive income which adds up over time. Make sure you have the appropriate shipping material for your inventory stocked up — shipping tubes for prints, envelopes for smaller zines, packing tape, and so on. I am pretty absentminded, so I make it a point to routinely check on my store notifications and orders so I don't miss anything and leave a customer hanging for weeks (which has definitely happened...)"

Jia Sung, Artist

"If you have the means, online can be great. I would suggest dedicating one day a week to shipment, and make it clear on your site, so that people won't expect the package any sooner."

8 Ball Community

"I definitely haven't done this right for many years. All our web sale money comes to me and I distribute it back out to artists and other collective members, but I'm not organized about it at all and we're really bad at tracking inventory! I will say, we always prioritize paying artists before anything else, so it's a lot of random Venmo-ing every time sales come through. I do recommend it though because people really like to buy stuff online... Also, when we're publishing for other folks who aren't in established collectives, having an online sales channel can be really helpful. Especially if those folks don't want to table themselves or are living in places that don't have frequent in-person book events."

Holly Meadows-Smith, Irrelevant Press

"We don't really like receiving promotional emails, so we only send our 4 emails a year, one for each season which announces our new publications. When this email goes out, we usually get a surge of online sales. This email is sent through Mailchimp, which is connected to our Squarespace website."

Tammy Nguyen, Passenger Pigeon Press

"We use storenvy and since we don't mind the .storenvy in the URL, the cost is just a small service fee on each order. It's not a huge commitment and we don't lose money if nothing sells in the online store for a month. We also sell stuff like pins and shirts through the store, which seem to sell better than books online."

Alex Barsky & Zack Lydon, Zine Hug



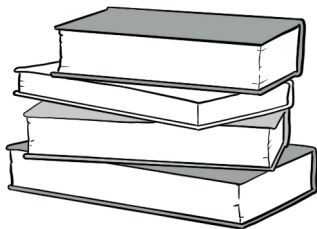
Thoughts on how to get work collected?

"After 2 years of Homie House shenanigans, we realized that librarians are the art buyers of the art book world. We have been lucky to have residencies in libraries and have had the privilege of working side by side with librarians for months at a time. No one will archive your work like they do, no one will value the impact you are making in the book world like they do, and no one will pay a higher price for your book than they do. Make friends with your librarians, explain your practice to them, show them why you do what you do, bring them into your community. They are some of the best humans on this earth, and that's not just because they have the money. It is because they understand the book form, and have an endless curiosity for all who are challenging the book form in new and enchanting ways. Love your librarian, spend time with them, learn from them, bring them books."

Adriana Monsalve + Caterina Ragg, Homie House Press

*"When Endless first started, we hosted *a lot* of events, we actively engaged a public audience and also spent time reaching out to librarians, independent publishers, and artists to come by or participate in the project. We also did a lot of partnerships with schools through these events. You have to be an active participant in the community to meet the people who can buy your books for these institutions. Whether your connection is research, editorial, publishing artists, you have to know what these libraries have in their collection and connect them with work you've made that would be a good fit. Most of the time, if you can chew the fat with them for a bit, they'll decide for themselves what they want. Sometimes it's totally unexpected! Other times, I push work on them that I believe represents voices missing from their collections. That's the other lesson I've learned, gotta stick up for your beliefs sometimes, and other times, you gotta realize maybe you're just off the mark... I'm still figuring this out."*

Paul John, Endless Editions



"I've been lucky to have my publications in over 40 private collections. Often, books are included in private collections without your knowledge. They might be bought at places like Printed Matter and other art book stores which don't necessarily contact you when books are collected. I believe having my work on sale at various bookstores across the country has helped my work to get acquired by many institutions. I have also cold-emailed many institutions to inquire about being a part of their collection. This doesn't always work but I have had many situations where it has. I've also had many collections email me directly to add my work to their collection. The end goal should not be, in my opinion, being in an institutional collection, but to make work you are truly proud of. Having my work in prominent institutions allows me to leverage the social capital it brings to continue to sell and promote my platform to make money for myself and the artists I work with."

Be Oakley, GenderFail

LIBRARY CARD	
Title	
Author	
Due Date	Borrower's Name

Resource Guide (NY)

	Public Collection	Buys/Consigs Books	Classes/Events
8 Ball Community	●		●
ABC No Rio	●		
Barnard Zine Library	●		
Bluestockings		▲	
Booklyn		▲	●
Center for Book Arts	●		●
Chinatown Soup		▲	●
Dashwood Books		▲	
Desert Island		▲	
Endless Editions			
Herstory Archives	●		
Interference Archive	●		●
Lucky Risograph			●
Miriam Gallery		▲	●
Printed Matter		▲	●
Quimby's		▲	●
Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop			●
Secret Riso Club			●
Small Editions			●
SVA RisoLAB			●
TXTbooks			
Wendy's Subway	●		●
Women's Studio Workshop			●

	Production Services	Grants/Residencies	Volunteer Program
		●	▲
			▲
		●	▲
	▲	●	▲
	▲	●	
		●	
		●	
		●	▲
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Design by Hannah Pierce

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