

Exhibition Catalogues: **Why? How?**

We all, every one of us artists, love to exhibit our work. It is wonderful to haul our paintings, drawings, sculpture, photos – whatever lights our creative fires – out of the crowded studio and into the cool elegant confines of a gallery.

Our work looks so much better, isolated on the white walls, with the integrity of space and the visual flow of a well-designed installation, that our confidence is reborn. But the exhibition inevitably closes. What then? What is left – extra announcement cards perhaps, bills to pay, some articles in the media if we are lucky?

And when the art historians complain about the difficulties of researching contemporary artists, what do we have to offer? Have we ensured a resource – exhibition documentation, i.e. catalogues?

Of course it's a lot of work and expense to publish catalogues. But it can be done, and if the exhibition being documented is sponsored by an organization (like a Women's Caucus for Art chapter), then the work and expense can be spread around a bit.

The Peninsula Chapter of the WCA began with desk-top publishing of Chapter exhibitions several years ago, thanks to the hard work and determination of Arabella Decker.

Then a chapter member, Leigh Toldi, told the chapter about online publishing. She learned how to produce books documenting her daughter's high school theatrical productions using Blurb.com.

Kay Podolsky picked up Blurb.com where Leigh left off and now produces exhibition catalogues for the Peninsula Museum of Art.

This year (2009) Karen Gutfreund curated the "Control" exhibition co-sponsored by the South Bay Area and Peninsula chapters and produced the "Control" catalogue using Instant Publishers (online).

Each way of working has its advantages and disadvantages. We hope this guidebook will help you to choose the best way for you and your group to document your exhibitions. DO IT!

Ruth Waters
Peninsula Chapter
Women's Caucus for Art
2009

Desk-top publishing of exhibition catalogues by **Arabella Decker**

Reason for creating catalogues:

I have discovered that a catalogue is the proof that a show has taken place. Without printed and available documentation, people forget who and what was shown after the exhibit is over.

In case of disaster (like fire or flood), the catalogue may be the only proof an official will accept about the artist's level of professional achievement (think insurance).

The fact that catalogues are held in many hands assures the survivability of the information.

Making a catalogue by hand:

You will need:

1. Shiny or textured card stock @ \$20. or more a ream (500 sheets).
2. Paper for printing the catalog is expensive because it should be heavy paper that does not bleed and does take ink well. Count your pages, then decide whether you will print on one side or two (two-sided requires heavier paper but half as many sheets). Multiply by the number of catalogues to be produced in order to determine your materials cost.
3. Photoshop and /or another program that can be used to create each and every page will cost \$700. - \$1500.
4. Ink is a surprise cost because you need a lot of color and/or black ink to make the images and print stand out on each page (at least \$100. or more, depending on the number of catalogues to be printed).
5. Epson printers with archival inks are the best for the job @ \$300.
6. Either a special punch and coil system or a special staple system will be needed to put the book together. Punch and Coil will run \$300. A staple system for less than 50 pages will cost \$20.

Intense work and editing is needed:

1. First all images must be taken (300 dpi recommended)
2. Statements must be written and edited
3. Pages designed
4. Pages printed
5. Pages collated

6. Pages and cover put together and bound

Pitfalls of an in-house created catalog:

1. Because it does not have an ISBN number, it has less archival value for researchers.
2. Artists often write pages of nonsense (“artspeak”) unrelated to the work shown.
3. Grammar, spelling, and sentence structure must be checked by an experienced editor.
4. People often want more catalogs than were ordered and printed.

A lot of work, but it is worth the effort to document your art and your exhibitions!

Making an Online Book using InstantPublishers.com by **Karen Gutfreund**

www.InstantPublishers.com is a wonderful printing company based in Tennessee that I discovered in an internet search. Their prices, although based on quantity, were quite low and their customer service, quality of catalogues, and speed of production was very high.

The website has tables where you input the number of pages, color or black/white, paper quality, book size, and binding, and it will give you an instant quote on price for quantity. The minimum quantity for ordering from Instant Publishers is 25 catalogues. If you choose to get an ISBN number for your publication, Instant Publishers can assign one for you.

Production of the books could not be simpler. One can either use IP's MSWord templates or upload a PDF file. These files will be stored in your online library and go to print from there.

Example of Pricing: An 8" x 11" catalog with 113 pages, 99 in color, high gloss cover, was \$15 delivered by ordering 250. Reordering just 25 of the same catalog was \$22 each.

My Method of Creating a Catalogue: I do not have graphics or publishing software skills but have found using Microsoft Word and Excel a simple way to create a catalogue. I've outlined the steps below.

1. Create a database in Excel with the artist's information in individual cells: Artist Name, Title of Artwork, Medium, Dimensions, Year, Price, and Artist Statement.
2. Using Microsoft Word, I created the title pages and all the additional pages of information such as Curator's Statement, Artist Directory, etc. In other words, create a page in Word for each individual page you would like in your book, in the correct order.
3. Create a template and format in Word for the way you would like the artist pages to look -- with your font, font size, spacing etc...
4. Complete a Mail Merge with your database of artist information in Excel into your Word template. This will format each page exactly the same.
5. Copy and Paste the individual images into the respective artist pages.
6. PROOF READ PROOF READ PROOF READ. Did I say proof read? A very good idea is to have a second pair of eyes look it over for any

typo's.

7. Convert your document into PDF format. If you do not own PDF software, you can either download Adobe PDF for free or use www.cutepdf.com. I found this software very easy to install and use.

8. Upload the PDF file.

9. Custom covers can also be created for your catalogs. This does require someone with graphic skills.

About Artist's Statements:

Take the time, make the effort, to write an effective artist's statement. The artist statement cannot be understated or underestimated. A clear, concise, well-written artist statement is essential. It can move the artist's work from being just another pretty piece to a more scholarly level.

Other notes on catalogues:

As a curator and having produced many catalogues, I would like to stress the importance of:

- good quality images of one's artwork;
- making sure the information given for the work is accurate.

AND - As the mission of WCA evolves into Activism through Art, we artists need to be able to explain to our viewers (and readers) what the work means and its significance in our culture. Documentation is essential.

Making an Online Book through Blurb.com Publishers by **Leigh Toldi**

Why I Did It:

My experience with online bookmaking began when I volunteered to be the historian and photographer for my daughter's high school drama department. A parent had heard of online bookmaking and was hoping I could put together a photo book of each of the three plays they made a year. I was already experienced with traditional publishing, so the prospect of making a book online tickled my curiosity.

Which Online Company?:

My first step was to find the right online book publishing company. Luckily there were comparison articles easily found on the internet and I settled with Blurb, primarily because at that time the color reproduction was rated the highest and the pricing was rated the lowest.

Ordering One Book at a Time:

An important feature for online book making is that there is no requirement to buy in bulk. The printers can print up and ship out one book at a time. The price is a bit higher than bulk orders, but for a book builder who has no idea of how many books will be in demand, this feature is invaluable. The online companies keep the books on file in their database, ready for future orders.

Public and Private Publishing:

Books at Blurb can be offered to the public through their online bookstore, or kept private. In my case I kept the books private. To make these books available, all I had to do was send the drama families the private sales link to my book. They ordered directly from Blurb, which enabled me to keep out of the how-many-to-order/financing-in-advance/where-to-deliver-and-pick-up complications of bulk printing and delivery.

Free Blurb BookSmart Design Software for Laymen and PDF to Book for Professionals:

Another feature of Blurb that I liked is that their free BookSmart software offered quite a variety of design options, many of them quite professional looking. Blurb has a large collection of templates to choose from which make almost any regular book project possible. I

was able to make my drama photo books powerfully dynamic and theatrical with no trouble at all. For the more creative designer, the good news is that Blurb recently added the valuable feature PDF to Book, which allows professional designers using InDesign or Word to upload PDFs directly.

Covers, Paper, and Binding:

Blurb books can be ordered individually with soft or hard covers, dusk jacket, and image wrap options. I was disappointed with the soft cover on my first book (it tended to curl up after multiple uses), so I chose to spend the extra cash for hard covers in all subsequent orderings.

Blurb offers two grades of paper, the price a bit higher for the premium 100-pound with its silk finish and better opacity/image quality. Book bindings are glued, not sewn, so one has to be careful not to press the books open too far. Blurb has a good replacement policy for books that arrive with production errors.

Sizes:

Most online publishers offer a variety of book sizes. Blurb keeps expanding their options and at this time offers five sizes: 7" x 7", 8" x 10", 10" x 8", 11" x 13", and 12" x 12".

Copyright and ISBN:

The owner of the book retains the copyright of each book they publish through Blurb. Blurb also can assign ISBN numbers for those who are interested.

Book Design Ideas:

It's a good idea to wander around in the Blurb website to find out how other people have designed their books. "Book Ideas," found under "Make Books," offers a variety of visual examples. Making art catalogues will fit into many formats.

Making the Book:

For the beginner, Blurb's novice-friendly software, BookSmart, is very easy to navigate.

After downloading the software, a tutorial guide is offered on the first screen. More adventurous types can just dive in by clicking "Start a New Book." You will be asked to choose a size and name the book, and on the next screen, a format style. I used the portfolio format for all of my drama books, finding this plan was convenient for interesting image layouts combined with little wording.

Again you will be asked to make a choice between "Start Book Now" and "Guide Me." The guide path will show you how to select photos from your computer, iPhoto or attached drives. The next screen helps you choose photo borders and the background color for your pages.

Finally your bookmaking screen will pop up. On the top left is a box with page format options. Below this is a box that holds your photos. In the center of your screen is the page you are working on, and at the bottom are thumbnails of each page for quick navigation. At the top center is a group of tools for creating interesting layouts for your book as you build page upon page.

The photo image box can be filled in different ways. You can put your images into the box manually, or have the software automatically pick them up off your computer. Once you find an image you want to put on a page, you click on that image, then drag and drop into place on your book page.

You will be able to zoom in and out of a page and preview what it will look like when printed. You can easily move pages or images around by clicking and dragging thumbnails at the bottom. Blurb offers a generally accepted format plan for their book layout, but I found I could easily drop their proposed title/chapter page, etc., and custom design my own.

Blurb frequently updates their BookSmart software, offering new choices for ease of individual design. Just fooling around with the features, before actually making the book, is a good idea. You will discover fun applications that will enable you to control the design of your book, and hints to make the construction go faster.

Proof Copy:

Once the book is made, you have the option of printing the book on your own printer, or sending it to Blurb and buying one copy, a proof copy. I found the cost to be about the same for both techniques. The question is more about how much time you have before you need your book.

Delivery of Books:

From my experience, Blurb took from 7 to 12 days to print and deliver ordered books, at the slowest delivery rate. Check your books immediately for printing flaws and contact Blurb right away for replacement of the occasional problem book (usually loose binding). You will need your order number.

Back-Up:

BookSmart automatically saves your book on your computer as you build, so there is little fear that you will lose your content to an electrical outage. Blurb offers ideas for backing up your book should your hard drive crash. Once your book has been sent off to the printer, and you have ordered your first copy, your book is stored in the Blurb database. You can update and change this copy by reworking the book you have on your computer and republishing.

Estimated Time Lines:

It consistently took me about five long days to make my 160-page photo books. I had to search through and orchestrate approximately 2,000 photos per book to create these documentaries. I had to input ample word usage for about 10 of these pages, and this was the slowest part of making the book, taking up half the time. Making an art catalogue, once you have your format down, should be quicker. Also, I hear Blurb has smoothed out some of the word input problems they had when I used this publisher.

Prices:

At this time Blurb lists a book of 100 pages, soft cover, as costing \$20 (hard cover is \$32.) This does not include tax and shipping. There are discounts on volume orders.

When I made my last book in 2008 it cost, complete with tax and shipping, about \$60 for one hard cover, dust jacket, 8" x 10" book of 160 pages. The price went down \$10 when I ordered 10 or more of the same book and cover type.

Check Online for Up-to-Date Online Publishing Comparisons and Reviews:

Other popular online bookmaking companies are WeBook, Lulu, and Ooop. Make sure you check review dates as the software changes, at least for Blurb, about every six months.

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Current Comments re Blurb Publishing by **Kay Podolsky**

I have reviewed Leigh's commentary on Blurb and she is very complete. I would only add a couple of comments, especially after our recent experience (2009) publishing exhibition catalogues for the Peninsula Museum of Art.

1. First, think about what you want from Blurb.com. If this is a one-time publication, or for you personally, then use your name as author when signing in. If this publication will be the first of several produced by an organization, use the organization's name as author when signing in. That will be the name Blurb.com will use to identify your bookshelf; if you change names, your publications will be hard to find.

2. Blurb keeps updating their programs; now it is possible to take a format for a page and adjust it for your own use. Picture blocks and word blocks can be resized to accommodate your layout.

3. If you repeat a procedure (from an earlier project) and it doesn't work this time, the Blurb techs are very helpful and accessible. Go to the Blurb.com home page and click on Help in the top right-hand corner. A Help page with lots of answers will come up.

If you have a different question or issue, click on Contact Support and follow the prompts. They will immediately acknowledge your inquiry, and you should get a specific answer by email in two days.

Be sure to keep track of the case number assigned to your inquiry; it must be included with each email (in case a different tech is on duty) so they can find your file.