

# AMPLIFY ARTS

## Publishing and Self-Publishing Resource Guide

### Why is publishing important?

Establishing a publication history can help to legitimize the creative practices of writers, artists, and performing artists in a few different ways. The modes of publication and publication formats might differ, but producing some sort of creative or academic output that circulates can help expand audiences, generate sales, increase visibility, and lead to new opportunities.

### What are some types of publications where your work could appear?

1. **Zines:** Usually not printed in editions of over 100, zines are small publications that are created primarily for the purpose of circulating. Often photocopied and hand produced by an individual artist or group of artists, zines have a long history of relying on DIY aesthetics and alternative modes of distribution to reach specific audiences and create pockets of subcultural communities. Disseminating the views of the artist, artists, or editor often takes precedence over generating profit from sales.
2. **Artist Books:** More substantial than a zine, artist books are works in print that use the book format to transmit and circulate visual information. They're often considered an integral part of an artist's body of work, printed in unique or small editions, and published independently. Sought after by collectors as objects that appreciate in value, artist books have come to represent a significant segment of the market. John Giorno, David Horvitz, Frances Stark, Martin Kippenberger, and Karen Reimer are a few examples of contemporary artists who consider working with the format of the book central to their practice.
3. **Anthologies:** An anthology is a collection of work by several different artists, writers, or a combination of both. Unlike exhibition catalogs, anthologies aren't produced in conjunction with a specific show and can be organized more informally around a central theme, or for the purpose of collaborating with other artists / writers. Anthologizing your work in a book alongside others can emphasize relationships and affinities that already exist to highlight shared conceptual preoccupations or socio-political / cultural concerns. It can also build community and reinforce relationships while expanding your audience. Anthologies can be artist-generated or put together by an editor who may also be an artist, curator, or critic. These might be published independently in partnership with an institution or publisher. Print runs and production costs tend to vary and occupy a kind of in-between place between zines and artist books, that are relatively straightforward to produce, and larger artist monographs, exhibition catalogs, and surveys that involve institutions, publishers, and more substantial budgets.

4. **Monographs:** An artist monograph is a volume of one artist's work that encapsulates the breadth and depth of that artist's process and creative output. Monographs can be published while artists are living or posthumously and are usually produced in conjunction with a significant museum show or gallery exhibition. Established critics or curators typically contribute critical essays that discuss the artist's work and place it within a historical context in relationship to other important artists or movements. Costs associated with producing a monograph with a substantial print run can easily reach tens of thousands of dollars, or more, making them difficult to produce without institutional support or a co-publishing agreement with an established press.
5. **Exhibition Catalogs:** Museums or galleries often print exhibition catalogs for group / solo exhibitions as a way of producing academic output that exists beyond the walls of the institution. These books serve a record of a particular exhibition and usually include curatorial essays that discuss individual artists' contributions to the show, how those works relate to one another, and the historical significance of the exhibition. For a lot of us who can't travel to every show we'd like to see, the exhibition catalog functions as a tangible object through which we're still able to experience the exhibition without having seen it in person. Curators, critics, and students use exhibition catalogs as tools for research, and for that reason, they can become extremely collectable. The cost of producing an exhibition catalog for a big show can easily reach tens of thousands of dollars.
6. **Surveys:** A survey is usually a volume written by an art historian, or a group of art historians, that focuses on a specific time period or movement. Surveys are often used in highschool and university art history courses and tend to be a bit more general in tone. Having your work included or referenced in a survey can mean reaching a wider audience and establishing a concrete position in the art historical canon. The selection process for inclusion in a survey is extremely selective and is usually based on an artist's exhibition / performance history, critical discussion surrounding that artist's work, and how that discussion has influenced the broader culture. Surveys are costly to produce but are often reprinted in multiple editions and large print runs, giving them the wider reach among not only arts audiences but more general audiences as well.

### How do you find a publisher?

Whether you're working on an artist book, compiling an anthology, or writing a survey, finding a publisher can be challenging. A good first step is doing a little research. Publishing houses from the smallest independent press to huge corporations that own multiple imprints, all have publishing programs that include certain types of titles and exclude others. A publisher that puts out mostly Young Adult fiction probably won't be interested in publishing an artist book, just like a small arts press probably wouldn't be interested in publishing a teen vampire novel. Narrowing the field a bit by identifying publishers whose programs you like can help simplify the process.

Once you've done your research, most publishers' websites include a contact page or link to a submissions page. Finding a publisher can be as easy as sending an email, but like all submission processes, rejection is an inherent part of reaching your objective. Every 'no' however, is an opportunity to ask for feedback, establish personal relationships, and hope that those relationships lead to good things down the road. The fact that a current project doesn't fit into a publisher's program doesn't completely negate the possibility of future projects having a shot. Additionally, for each exhibition or performance opportunity that comes your way, ask the gallery or institution you're working with if there's a publication budget and whether creating a book or catalog for the show is a possibility. Large museum and gallery shows will often have a dedicated publication budget and sometimes, depending on the institution, their own internal publication department. Smaller spaces allocate money to publications as well. It's always worth asking; institutions of all sizes appreciate the fact that publications lend their organization a greater degree of legitimacy.

Below is a list of arts publishers of varying sizes that all have well established programs where you can see examples of other zines, artist books, anthologies, monographs, exhibition catalogs, and surveys.

#### **Small / Independent Art Publishers:**

1. Peradam: <http://www.peradam.info/publications.html>
2. Karma: <http://karmakarma.org/>
3. Dancing Foxes: <http://www.dfpress.us/index.html>
4. Errant Bodies: <http://www.errantbodies.org/>
5. Nieves: <https://www.nieves.ch/>
6. Triple Canopy: <https://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/>
7. Siglio: <http://sigliopress.com/>
8. Primary Information: <http://www.primaryinformation.org/>
9. Badlands Unlimited: <https://badlandsunlimited.com/>
10. Boo-Hooray: <http://www.boo-hooray.com/>
11. Capricious: <https://becapricious.com/>
12. Archive Books: <http://www.archivebooks.org/>
13. Semiotext(e): <http://semiotexte.com/>
14. E-Flux: <http://www.e-flux.com/>
15. Sternberg Press: <http://www.sternberg-press.com/>
16. Mousse Publishing: <https://www.moussepublishing.com/>
17. Ridinghouse Books: <http://ridinghouse.co.uk/>
18. Valiz: <http://www.valiz.nl/en/>
19. Afterall Books: <https://www.afterall.org/books/>
20. Mack Books: <http://mackbooks.co.uk/>

#### **Academic Art Publishers:**

1. MIT Press: <https://mitpress.mit.edu/>
2. Yale University Press: <http://yalebooks.yale.edu/>
3. University of Chicago Press: <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/index.html>
4. University of Minnesota Press: <https://www.upress.umn.edu/>
5. Duke University Press: <https://www.dukeupress.edu/>

#### **Larger Art Publishers and Museum / Gallery Publishers:**

1. Gregory R. Miller & Co: <http://grmandco.com/temp/>
2. Rizzoli: <http://www.rizzoliusa.com/>
3. Phaidon: <http://www.phaidon.com/about-phaidon/>
4. Thames & Hudson: <http://www.thamesandhudsonusa.com/>
5. Hatje Cantz: <http://www.hatjecantz.de/>
6. JRP | Ringier: <http://www.jrp-ringier.com/pages/index.php>
7. Steidl: <https://steidl.de/>
8. Tate Publishing: <http://www.tate.org.uk/about/business-services/tate-publishing>
9. Whitechapel Gallery: <http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/>
10. David Zwirner Books: <https://davidzwirnerbooks.com/>
11. Hauser & Wirth: <https://www.hauserwirth.com/>
12. ICA Philadelphia: <http://icaphila.org/about>
13. The New Museum of Contemporary Art: <http://www.newmuseum.org/>
14. The Walker Art Center: <https://walkerart.org/>

### How do you get your books out into the world?

Traditionally a publisher will work with a distributor to warehouse inventory and provide sales support. Having distribution adds an additional level of marketing and creates inroads to audiences a publisher might reach otherwise. Sales reps on both the publisher and distributor end will work to promote their seasonal offerings of publications or "lists." Those lists travel to book buyers at art institutions, large retail vendors, and independent bookstores, making the process of placing your book a little simpler. Some larger publishers act as their own distributors and work with affiliate publishers to round out their offerings.

More grassroots methods of distributing and marketing your work can be effective as well. Getting the word out through social media, individual websites, and visiting local bookstores with copies in hand can generate excitement and build interest early. If you have a gallery that represents your work, ask them to have copies available for sale and contract with your publisher to reserve copies of your book to send to curators or critics with whom you'd like to work. A combination of tactics that include any / all of the above will provide more opportunities for circulation and will ultimately help you reach a wider audience.

Some art book distributors that cast wide nets and have warehouse space to store inventory are:

1. D.A.P. / Artbook: <http://www.artbook.com/>
2. RAM Publications: <http://www.rampub.com/>
3. Penguin Random House: <http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/>
4. Consortium Book Group: <http://www.cbsd.com/>
5. W.W. Norton: <http://books.wwnorton.com/books/index.aspx>
6. Independent Publishers Group: <http://www.ipgbook.com/>
7. TriLiteral: <http://www.triliteral.org/>
8. Small Press Distribution: <https://www.spdbooks.org/>

### What about self-publishing?

Artists have a long history of self-publishing their work. Self-publishing describes the process of publishing a book or any other media without the support of an established publisher. Because technology is vastly changing the publishing industry, artists and authors are looking to self-publish more often due to the ease and affordability self-publishing. If an artist or author is willing to front a little bit of money or fundraise to produce a publication, there are a few factors that make doing-it-yourself an accessible, and sometimes more viable, option.

Self-publishing used to be expensive and time-consuming. Artists would have to Xerox black and white magazines and bind them by hand. Color publishing was even more expensive. In order to get a nice, hardcover book you had to work with a publishing house, which meant you had to answer to someone else when it came to design decisions, release dates, distribution, etc. Some independent zines are still made using Xerox machines and DIY processes, but for those who want a more polished look, self-publishing is an accessible option. Most self-publishing services are conducted exclusively online with sites like Lulu, CreateSpace, Blurb, and IngramSpark. You will be prompted to upload a cover, book pages, and any other content that will be bound together in your publication.

While publishing houses are absolutely necessary when it comes to contributing to the larger art discourse, self-publishing has definitely broadened the field, and artists everywhere can see their books realized at an affordable price with a quick turnaround.

### A Few Questions to Ask Yourself:

If you want to create your own publication it's best to research your options and plan far in advance of any foreseeable deadline, self-imposed or not. Here are some questions to ask before you begin designing your publication:

1. **What is your bottom line cost per item?** This means the most you are willing to spend to print each book. Deciding this ahead of time will help make some later tough decisions much easier.
2. **Do you want your publication to be in color, or black and white?** Black and white books cost much less to print, but some images simply must be in color. If you do decide to print your book in color, you may have to sacrifice page count to meet your bottom line budget. Consult with your publisher to ensure that image quality will not be diminished. You can also entertain the idea of a smaller edition of your publication in color and a larger edition in black and white.
3. **How many pages will be in your publication?** A 24-page book obviously costs less to print than a 240-page book. Pay attention to how publishers charge for pages printed. Sometimes a publisher will charge the same amount for a book between 144 and 184 pages. Do your research.
4. **How good are you at designing books?** A poorly designed book can create a horrible reading experience and may even make your work look bad. If you do have some design experience, and know the basics of a program like InDesign, you can save a good chunk of change by designing the book yourself. For those who don't know how to use design programs, some self-publishers have great intuitive publishing software available for download from their website. They contain templates and easy drag-and-drop instructions for you to follow. Although these software alternatives can be convenient for non-tech-savvy artists, they are very limited in design options. Good design is essential when it comes to communicating content effectively. If you're not completely confident in your own design skills, it might be worth paying or trading work with a designer who can translate what you see in your head to the page.
5. **How do you plan to distribute your book?** If you only want to send your book around to select collectors or galleries this might influence how many books you want to initially print. If you are planning to sell a lot of books at an event, like a fair or an opening, you might need to order more books at once. While one of the joys of self-publishing is that you can print books on-demand, meaning one at a time, you need to allow for print time, which can be as long as three weeks. Plan ahead!

### **How Do You Publish a Self-Published Book?**

How you publish your book varies depending on which self-publishing service you go with. Some publishing companies like Blurb or Lulu put their own logo on final books and charge a small fee to have this removed from your book. It can be worth paying the fee for your book to look more professional.

Have someone responsible and skilled read and edit your publication before sending it to press. A good copyeditor will find and correct grammar and spelling mistakes. You might consider paying or trading work with someone to copyedit. At the very least, have a family member, friend, or one of your peers take look at your book before it goes to press. Two or three sets of eyes are much better than one.

If time permits, order a test copy of your book to get a feel for the printer's paper stock and printing quality. You don't want to spend hundreds of dollars ordering dozens of books, only to be dissatisfied with the end product. Once you get your test book, consider the weight of the paper, how it absorbs color, and the quality of the printing. It's best to get your book designed and printed correctly the first time and avoid the expense and hassle of redesigning and reordering it several times.

You may also want to look into buying an ISBN for your book. ISBN stands for International Standard Book number and is a 13-digit code used to uniquely identify your book that allows libraries, publishers, and book dealers to locate and

identify specific books. If you'd like to sell your book in a retail outlet, an ISBN is a must. A single ISBN will cost around \$125, but the price for individual ISBNs comes down if you buy in batches.

You may also want to consider registering your book's copyright. Copyright exists from the moment the work is created, but in order to bring a lawsuit for infringement, if it comes to that point, you must first have registered your copyright with the US Copyright Office. It's a simple process that will cost between \$35 and \$55, depending on the material you're copyrighting, but like with all aspects of publishing and self-publishing, it can take time and you'll be doing yourself a big favor by planning ahead. Take a look at the following sites to learn more about purchasing ISBNs and registering copyright:

1. <https://www.isbnservices.com/>
2. <http://www.isbn.org/>
3. <https://copyright.gov/registration/>

### **How do you price and distribute a self-published book?**

Your publication serves multiple purposes.

1. It's a portfolio of sorts, something that can develop your collector base.
2. It's an academic tool that can help you secure teaching and lecture positions.
3. It can be a unique or editioned work of art.

Because your book can do so much for you, it should be priced to sell. Unless your book is part of a limited edition run, you want to make your book affordable to cover production costs and make enough money to print additional copies of your book down the line.

Be realistic when pricing your book. Usually this means charging twice what it cost to print. Many retailers mark-up three times the wholesale price. This pricing ensures a recovery of production, overhead, and genuine profit to the business. Most artist's monographs are around \$60 or less. If you try and sell your book for more than this you might find your pool of willing buyers shrinking. If you absolutely must sell your book for more than this, consider including a drawing or print with each copy. That way your book will be more appealing to a collector base that may not have enough money to buy your more expensive work, but still wants to support your practice.

Like everything in your art world life, context is king. After printing, shop your book around to local independent bookstores to see if they might be interested in selling it to the public. For example, Ooga Booga and Skylight Books in Los Angeles routinely sell self-published artists books. Quimby's Bookstore in Chicago also sells artists' books. New York City is filled with dozens of places, such as Printed-Matter, Inc., which stock self-published artists' books. If you don't live in these cities consider sending a copy to one of these stores with a great letter of introduction. However, be sure to check submission requirements. Many of these artist book stores receive a lot of submissions and their review process can be strict. If possible, join together with other artists and DIY publishers to sell your books at a local coffee shop, nonprofit organization, or bookstore.

Selling your publication online can be easy as well. You can create a shopping cart on your website and sell directly to your viewers. Many of the self-publishing services also give you the option of selling your book on their public marketplace. Although this might cost you money due to the percentage they take from each sale, you don't have to lift a finger. They won't provide the channels of distribution available to an established publisher, but if an artist or author has a website, a strong presence on social media, and the willingness to do a little leg work to place books in retail venues, more traditional channels of distribution become less important. And if you are particularly tech-savvy, have the time, and the money, you can translate your publication into an ebook. These mobile electronic books can be read on a tablet or smartphone. They can even be programmed to include video, animated graphics, sound, and live links.

Market your self-published book like you would your artwork. Start a Facebook page for it, start a blog, tweet about your book. Invite others to support your publishing efforts by spreading the word. Create an online lottery, where the winner gets a signed copy of your book. No matter what, make sure to get your book out to as many interested buyers and collectors as possible. Your book can operate as an exhibition space or project, as well as a traditional book.

The list of self-publishing platforms that follows could be worth exploring if you think striking out on your own could be right for you.

1. Bookbaby: <https://www.bookbaby.com/complete-self-publishing-package>
2. Blurb: <http://www.blurb.com/>
3. Lulu: <https://www.lulu.com/>
4. CreateSpace: <https://www.createspace.com/>
5. Smashwords: <https://www.smashwords.com/>
6. IngramSpark: <https://www.ingramspark.com/>

Bookstores that Review Artist Book Submissions:

1. Ooga Booga (Los Angeles): <http://oogaboogastore.com/>
2. Skylight Books (Los Angeles): <https://www.skylightbooks.com/>
3. Hennessey & Ingalls (Los Angeles): <https://www.hennesseyingalls.com/>
4. Printed Matter (New York): <https://www.printedmatter.org/>
5. New Museum Store (New York): <https://www.newmuseumstore.org/>
6. McNally Jackson (New York): <https://www.mcnallyjackson.com/>
7. Spoonbill & Sugartown (Brooklyn): <https://www.spoonbillbooks.com/>
8. MoMA PS1 (Queens): <https://momaps1.org/about/bookstore/>
9. Quimby's (Chicago): <https://www.quimbys.com/>
10. Jackson Street (Omaha): <http://jacksonstreetbooksellers.squarespace.com/>

#### **Additional Resources:**

1. <https://janefriedman.com/self-publish-your-book/>
2. <https://www.cnet.com/how-to/how-to-self-publish-an-ebook/>
3. <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/how-to-self-publish-a-print-book>