

# The Grey Guide

*to artist-run  
publishing &  
circulation*

EDITED BY  
*Anne Bertrand*

∞

ORIGINAL ESSAYS BY  
*Felicity Tayler*



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# What's at Stake?

"We are a sub-sector of artist-run culture, not of the publishing industry.... The thing we share is a passion for audacious, educational, and accessible art publishing in all its forms. Relentlessly resourceful and productive, we are a source of innovation for publishing in this country and beyond. Our work plays an essential role in advancing critical discourse and documentation of contemporary art in Canada."

by Anne Bertrand

—  
 Quotes opposite:  
 Gina Badger, notes taken at  
 the meeting of the TXT–Canadian Art Publishing Network  
 Meeting, November 7-8, 2014,  
 Artexte, Montréal.

OUR TITLE, *The Grey Guide to Artist-Run Publishing and Circulation* refers to the not-so-familiar category of “grey literature,” a mode of text-based cultural production common to our organizations/institutions. This category includes reference works, manuals, curatorial essays, directories, ephemera, grant applications, reports—works that often look inward upon the organization that produces them and that reside and circulate mostly outside the better known commercial and academic publishing and distribution channels. Furthermore, the title *Grey Guide* refers to the grey areas arising from an ongoing negotiation between owners and users of copyrighted content in the digital age with the result, we hope, of bringing greater nuance to an otherwise polarizing discussion. In this awareness, the *Grey Guide* focuses upon distribution as a key concern for publishing within artist-run culture, alongside complex issues like conditions of production, copyright and fair dealing, and ethical protocols arising from within a community of practice. A section on resources offers practical guidelines, a lexicon of publishing terms, and links to other reference documents of interest to artist-run centres (ARCs) that wish to support publishing in all its forms as part of their activities. The *Grey Guide* not only investigates why we publish, how and for whom, it serves as a reminder

that most makers of books in the visual arts wrestle with decisions at every step of their production, whether financial, material, ethical, or aesthetic.

Artist-run centres represent the interests of artists, critics, cultural workers and administrators working in relation to artist-run culture. Artist-run centres publish when artists choose to use the book, or related digital forms, as an artistic medium. Artist-run centres also publish in order to document exhibitions, producing pamphlets or didactic materials before or at the time of the exhibition, which can include short curatorial or creative essays. Less and less, artist-run centres produce anthologies including well-researched texts that reflect upon common themes arising throughout the past programming year. Artist-led publishing can take place through an artist-run centre, but also occurs in other institutional and para-institutional contexts.

The material forms assumed by artist-led publishing change as artists and their institutions seek new, agile and adaptive modes of dissemination. Such shifts in modes of address are responses, in part, to the pressures of chronic financial instability combined with a sincere desire to engage with the world outside

of the physical gallery space. Among these agile forms, the book represents an ideal for communicating concepts to the public through text and images: easy to share through digital editions, easy to ship (despite rising shipping costs), easy to exchange online or hand-to-hand. The circulation of publications is valued in artist-run culture for its potential to generate social relations, creating new publics over time. The seemingly unlimited potential for dissemination promised by digital formats often assumes that once produced (often as a labour of love), our publications will continue to be cared for by readers and collecting institutions, rather than left to linger in brick-and-mortar storage or fester, thanks to link rot, somewhere on a cloud server.

#### ART PUBLISHING AS A DISTINCT SUB-SECTOR OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION

ARCA and RCAAQ hired Felicity Tayler as a contributing editor for the *Grey Guide* because of her unique combination of experience as an artist, critic, cultural worker and art librarian. Tayler also recently completed her doctoral thesis, titled *Conceptual Nationalisms: Conceptual Book-works, Countercultural Imaginaries and the Neo-Avant-Garde*

*in Canada and Québec, 1967–1974*. The guide therefore benefits from art-historical grounding, as well as a practical understanding of the information systems that form the infrastructure of a future-oriented digital culture. Tayler's discussion of theoretical issues around copyright and intellectual property are not to be construed as legal advice; rather, they outline some basic principles. Tayler's tasks began with reviewing notes taken at various meetings of an *ad hoc* committee of independent publishers from Québec and Canada (see below for a full list of these meetings). She quickly realized that the content of the *Grey Guide* would have to respond to the concerns raised in these community-initiated meetings. Taking these concerns as a starting point helped to orient the focus of this guide toward addressing challenges related to distribution, rather than the materiality or production of publications *per se*. The quotes that introduce each brief are taken from the meeting minutes and capture the voices of participants keen to share their experiences of art publishing. These voices emphasize the fundamental role that discourse plays in the reception of contemporary art, as exhibitions are now frequently accompanied by texts that act as entry points to understanding the work—or, conversely, produce a veil of muted

meaning. Overall, participants agreed the resources required for effective international circulation of publicity and publications are grossly underestimated. While some art publishers continue to enjoy the services of commercial distribution, most must rely on proactive self-distribution.

Tayler sets the tone for the *Guide* in “What Is a Public, What Is Publicity?” Offering a set of definitions to help artist-led publishers think about how the act of publication creates performative effects; that is, making books, blogs and other textual ephemera can create a sense of belonging among disparate readers, potentially bringing new modes of social relations into being. Because each publisher's situation is unique—every organization is a distinct amalgam of institutional histories, mandate, governance, finances, stakeholders, and so on—no one model of publishing can be conceived, proposed, or promoted as a general “solution” for all organizations that participate in artist-run culture. In this essay, Tayler also introduces a faceted taxonomy of book forms typically used in art publishing. The idea is to show how the aesthetic choice of form is critical to attracting a public and to facilitating circulation through atypical trade routes. When shown an earlier draft of

this taxonomy of publishing forms and genres, artist Robin Metcalfe reflected upon the slipperiness of classification in a field that values hybrid publications that combine aspects of artists' books and exhibition catalogues:

The format for these is conceptually important, and directly involves the artist; these function only partly, if at all, as exhibition documentation in the usual sense, but might rather be considered a distinct publishing project that runs parallel to the exhibition. The emphasis may be on the aesthetic and material aspects (close to the artist's bookwork end of the spectrum) or on discursive aspects (critical, historical, parallel creative texts, etc.), lying closer to the monograph. (Robin Metcalfe, personal communication, October 6, 2015)

"From Dissemination to Circulation" emphasizes the active role that the publisher must play to ensure a connection with immediate and long-term readerships, whether this publisher is an artist-run centre, an independent small press, or the authors/artists themselves. Where "dissemination," a term often used in cultural policy, implies the wide spread of information without feedback from an audience, the term "circulation" acknowledges that publics enjoy agency

within the networked processes by which art publications travel and gain influence. The near absence of commercial distribution in this field has economic and social consequences, which are outlined by Esther Vincent, of Marginal Distribution in an excerpt from the conference proceedings of *Off Printing/Tiré à part* reproduced after the essay.

"Material Conditions" addresses the economics of writing and publishing as activities complementary to a visual art practice. Publishing in the visual arts is often articulated in terms of diminishing resources. Indeed, ARCA's research on the evolution of art-publication funding at the Canada Council for the Arts (2014) confirmed a diminishing eligibility for artist-run publishing projects over the past thirty years, with the exception of magazines (magazine funding has its own, internal challenges that will not be addressed in this guide). However, in a prior meeting of the *ad hoc* committee, an ARCA member expressed the conundrum differently, observing that relatively speaking, artist-run culture has access to "an incredible amount of resources, historical experience, knowledge; a solid network is in place, foundation firmly laid with designers, copy editors, printers, as well as

a long-standing relationship with the writing community.” Whatever the future brings, public funding remains critical to producing publications that cannot compete within the free-market economic model driving the processes of globalization. Author and literary historian Frank Davey’s essay “Economics and the Writer,” reproduced with the essay, argues that the need for public subsidies is a historical and structural problem:

These opportunities have been supported by a network of social and government commitments—at both federal and provincial levels—that underscore a belief that Canada’s cultural industries are too important—and too fragile—to be left to the whims of the global marketplace. (Frank Davey, p. 113)

“Moral and Legislative Economies of Artist-Run Publishing” reflects upon why there is a growing movement to explicitly recognize artist-run publishing as a public good, a dematerialized art object, a practice of community building, of knowledge sharing, or as a “gift” to readers. This essay proposes that artist-run publishing is presently responding to a legislative environment in which creative activity is defined as an economic resource, that is, as intellectual prop-

erty, which necessitates an oppositional relationship between copyright owners and copyright users. Within artist-run culture, the legislative frameworks of intellectual property law and related public funding policies are increasingly perceived to restrict or shut down cultural exchange—further disillusionment sets in as artists struggle to make a living.

The following essay, “Copyright as a Practice of Daily Life for Artists and Artist-Run Publishers” gives an overview of the mechanisms currently in place to ensure the compensation of artists for the use of their intellectual property. Conflicts arise when the cut-copy-and-paste logic, dialogic, pluralistic and participatory ideals of digital culture mean that the identity of an individual or publishing organization frequently oscillates between being the owner and the user of copyrighted content.

“Situating Artist-Run Publishing within Digital Culture” outlines the concept of the “public domain” as both a legal category and a symbolic battleground where international intellectual property law is contested by post-national “free culture” movements, which do not identify with social and economic inequalities arising from the restriction of cultural expression in a networked society. There are

parallels between the counter-publics attracted to artist-run publishing and to those arising within digital culture, such as those drawn to the open access, open source and Creative Commons movements.

“Resources and Resourcefulness” presents a “good enough” suite of practical tools, including a glossary of art publishing terms, which gives an idea of the resources required at various stages of production for print-based publications. An important, often overlooked component of these initiatives is the publicity required to ensure long-term circulation of publications needed to attract diverse niche publics. A sample checklist is provided so that artist-run publishers can make informed decisions from the outset about the form their publishing project will take, allowing them to carry out a project of any scope with more confidence.

“The Post-Digital Now” proposes advocacy avenues like the development of a writing fee schedule and support for non-literary, creative non-fiction translation, to further recognize art publishing as a distinct artistic form. More importantly, artists need to continue exploring alternative forms of publicity, such as by unleashing the potential of open access in the post-digital era, beyond the

cross-platform digital media and print circulation model employed in this guide. The authors hope that the *Grey Guide* may lend practitioners a better understanding of the nuanced situation in this field of activity, and of our own agency in negotiating usage and circulation of cultural productions, leading thereby, we hope, to less polarized positions.

#### SO, WHAT’S AT STAKE AND WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

This *Guide* seeks to provoke high-level debate about the role of publishing in artist-run culture. Combining theory with practice, *The Grey Guide* also offers practical guidance in this complex field, so that a new generation of artists and cultural workers who wish to professionalize may do so, while others may opt to remain resolutely DIY if they so please. Either way, somewhere on the continuum between adopting an entrepreneurial strategy and advocating for sustained public funding, this guide offers insight into the advantages and disadvantages inherent to a gamut of approaches. ∞



Meetings of an *ad hoc* committee of independent publishers from Québec and Canada began quite organically at the New York Art Book Fair (2008–12).

Leading to:

Unpublished Minutes, *Consultation on Art Books in Canada*, Visual Arts Section, Canada Council for the Arts, June 2012.

Followed by these meetings organized by ARCA:

Art Publishing Forum, *East of There*, Saint John, New Brunswick, June 23, 2013.

ARCA Writing and Independent Publishing Meeting, February 27, 2014, Librairie Formats, Montréal.

TXT—Canadian Art Publishing Network Meeting, November 7–8, 2014, Artex, Montréal.

TXT—Canadian Art Publishing Network Meeting, October 16–17, 2015, Or Gallery & VA/BF, Vancouver.

Tangentially related:

Meeting of Emerging and Developing Artist-Run Centres and Organizations, or, The No-Profit Model, The Pacific Association of Artist-Run Centres (PAARC), March 29, 2014, Vancouver.



# Essays

What Is a Public?

What Is Publicity?

by Felicity Tayler

THIS ESSAY will discuss a selection of terms drawn from the influential field of “public sphere theory,” which nuance the practical tasks involved in producing and circulating books, magazines, or digital content. A faceted taxonomy of publishing genres commonly issued by artist-run centres to accompany this essay (► <http://www.arca.art/greyguide/taxonomy/>). While it remains prone to the compartmentalization typical of classification schematics, the multidimensional nature of the faceted structure responds to the ways that these publishing genres deliberately blur boundaries through the use of visual strategies such as typographic design, choice of hybrid format, variable images and print quality, which frame the writerly tone of the content. These stylistic (aesthetic) choices have the potential to attract complex, overlapping readerships, or a diversity of publics.

The idea that there is something called a *public*, which artists, writers and other producers of cultural experiences hope to connect with, is an ideal necessary to the function of liberal democratic society. The *public sphere* is a discursive space, that is, an imaginary or conceptual space that is produced through language and the expression of ideas. The function of this space is to encourage debate and discussion. This debate can occur in real time, when people meet in social

places, but can also be temporally extended through media—books, magazines, newspapers and other kinds of textual communications (and today, blogs, videos and social media). This mediation allows people who may never physically meet to believe that they can have an impact on larger social issues by communicating their position through writing or images.

The term *publicity* encompasses the many material forms produced by this act of communication. Furthermore, the democratic ideal assumes that literate individuals have an equal opportunity to produce publicity, and thereby hold authorities accountable and influence public opinion. As many have pointed out, however, this ideal does not adequately account for intersectional issues, such as national sovereignty, race, class, gender and sexuality, which produce inequalities of representation.

The pluralist, participatory and polyvocal modes of communication fostered through digital media platforms have called into question the gap between the ideal of a public sphere and actual political agency in local, national and transnational contexts. Environmental, political and cultural events are now experienced on a global scale, as print and

digital media platforms are increasingly interconnected. However, there is a growing awareness that this expanded field of communications technologies is not inherently progressive; instead, they are shaped by existing legal and moral frameworks. There is a growing sense that the democratic ideals of the public sphere are unsustainable or under threat in a moment of “post-truth” politics and “fake news,” and many artists have responded by engaging with the limits of free speech and rights-based representation in print and online media.

Not all publishing by visual and media artists works at these limits of expression and representation; however, many artists do conceive of their publishing activities as performative speech acts, which create lasting social effects through an aesthetic experience rooted in the visual.

**EVERY PUBLIC FINDS A BOOK,  
EVERY BOOK FINDS A PUBLIC**

As readers and viewers, “Texts clamour at us. Images solicit our gaze,” yet at the same time, as theorist Michael Warner explains, we are burdened by our own agency to choose what messages gain our attention. For this reason, readers tend to participate in multiple discursive publics

over time, experiencing more than one type of collective identification. The cognitive processing of concepts expressed within a text's or image's content determines what publics we participate within and how those publics expand to include others. The means by which publications circulate is crucial to the process of how publics are made.

Visual arts publishing is a specialized area of the public sphere. In other words, it attracts a sub-public that identifies with special interests held in common. In the Euro-Canadian tradition, which remains a dominant strain in the visual arts, despite active and ongoing challenges from critical-minority practices, the visual arts press is intrinsically related to the public exhibition of works of art, and the lively social scenes arising around artistic activities. As an ideal, this sub-public is not conceived of as a social or economic elite that imposes standards upon others; rather, it is one space among others where rhetorical skills may be honed in order to take a stand upon political matters that impact areas beyond the visual arts.

#### **DOES PUBLIC FUNDING MAKE PUBLICS?**

The ideal of a public sphere is historically

linked to the political formation of the sovereign nation-state. The legislative territory is reinforced through the cultivation of a national public that shares a social imaginary (a set of values, traditions, customs, language, territory, etc.). A public formed around an interest in the visual arts can participate in cultivating this national imaginary, as the founders of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec understood in the mid-twentieth century.

The elusive concept of a revolutionary *proletarian public sphere* depends on a belief that national public funding provides a protectionist niche from market forces. In the mid- to late twentieth century, for instance, it was possible for artists in Canada and Québec to conceive of themselves as self-determined "cultural workers" who could change the structural relationship between class and cultural production. This generation of artists fell short of transforming the public sphere; however, an intriguing paradox arose, as public funding sources operated in tandem with copyright policy reforms, which narrowly defined artists' rights in terms of ownership of intellectual property. This paradox will be further expanded upon in future essays.

In lieu of revolutionizing the public sphere, visual arts publishing sometimes creates *counter-publicity*; that is, artists can use aesthetic strategies to produce modes of public address that do not fully align with the messaging of a homogenizing global art world dominated by biennials and art fairs, or a larger, spectacularized corporate media space. When this occurs, often through the appropriation of dominant publicity forms and the parody of their circulation patterns, it is possible for *counter-publics* to be created from people who are consciously or unconsciously drawn to satire or parodies of tropes and media stereotypes.

*Artistic counter-publics* have art-historical precedents in the magazines and books of the European avant-garde and the North American neo-avant-garde. The exciting thing (for artists) about counter-publics is that they have the potential to transform one's experience of the world through aesthetic means. That is, they temporarily produce a space where it is possible to collectively reimagine the fixed identity categories or social roles assigned by dominant media representations.

Artistic counter-publics may overlap with *sub-altern*, or *secret publics* that form because legal or moral censorship limits the ability for members of this

self-identifying group to see themselves as fully represented in society. The bilingual and transcultural code-switching practiced in the oral histories and print cultures of peoples determined to be the nation's racial or ethnic "other" is an example of this type of public. Likewise, the magazines and books that are retrospectively cherished as traces of feminist consciousness-raising or pre-Stonewall queer culture work this way. The formation of these counter-publics are historically contingent upon a lack of rights-based representation; this means that as legal and moral frameworks shift, these invisible publics may themselves shift into a register of public respectability, or at least tolerance. However, their symbolic value as critical minority voices does not diminish when this shift takes place.

*Transnational publics* form through diasporic, activist, subcultural, or countercultural affiliations. Conditions of (in)visibility, feelings of marginalization or disidentification with a dominant cultural group evinces feelings of associative belonging that transcend local contexts and surpass national boundaries. One might even consider whether publishing from rural regions could attract a global public concerned with peripheral positions in a moment when global economic development favours the creative economies of urban centres.



In the digital culture of the early twenty-first century, some argue that the critical function of artistic publics has been subsumed by the explosion of a global art market, the powerful influence of corporate advertising and speculative, profit-seeking promotional activity. For others, these artistic publics remain important because they can foster a shifting sense of community and identity that transposes local and national concerns into transnational geographies. It has been argued that networks of digital culture reproduce the inequalities perpetuated in other spaces of public life. Within the context of digital culture, public funding of the arts remains a necessary counterpart to intellectual property mechanisms precisely because it offsets economic access barriers that continue to affect artists who produce from a Canadian or Québécois context. Economic models, such as “the long tail,” were developed to describe a trend in digital culture where small-scale producers would be able to reach global niche markets through online sales. In practice, this model has proved faulty as it overlooks the operating costs that remain the material reality of so-called immaterial networks. Large e-commerce aggregators such as Amazon and eBay are the beneficiaries here, not artists or their publishers. Grants from public funders

allow small publishers to produce their multiplicity of publics on this long tail. Otherwise, economic access barriers constrain the ability of artist-run publishers to attract and participate in artistic counter-publics and/or other transnational publics. The recent Department of Canadian Heritage consultations on cultural policy in the digital era have encouraged artists across disciplines to affirm economic barriers to access as an ongoing issue in creating publics:

Throughout the consultations this fall on Digital Cultural policy (#digicancon), Canadian Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly has repeatedly said that artists/cultural workers should be able to derive a living from their work. However, support is needed federally to navigate this new digital sector. Regulation of the internet and its power is desperately needed especially in terms of defending artists/content creators from overwhelming international trade agreements, the almost oligarchic power of internet service providers (ISPs) and the imbalance between commercialism and artistic practices. [Our translation.] (“Plaidoyer pour une politique culturelle équitable,” *Le Devoir*, November 19, 2016.)

Canada’s creative professionals have led Canada in the digital shift, but we struggle

to earn a livelihood from it. It's not from lack of trying. We've digitized our work and mastered the internet. We've become social media directors for our projects. We connect directly with our fan bases, and monetize everything that we can. So why are more and more of us being forced to abandon creative work? And why do Canada's youth increasingly seek career paths outside the creative sector? (Focus on Creators, "Our Letter to Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly.") ∞

#### FURTHER READINGS

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› <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bas-dE0TpgTg>

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► <http://www.prologuenumerique.ca/675030-1-livre-arts-lettres/art-rebelle-et-contre-culture.html>

Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (abbreviated version).

► <http://castillocorrales.fr/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Michael-Warner-Publics-Short.pdf>

# From Dissemination to Circulation

“For independent non-industry publishers, the chief goal of sales and/or distribution is to connect audiences to content. Distribution is not a revenue-generating activity, so funding needs to come from elsewhere, i.e., programming or publishing grants ... the chief goal of distribution is less to generate income or even recoup expenses, but to ensure that published materials get out to readers/audiences.”

“Selling on commission is not a model that works for [artist-run] publishers; independent publishers don’t want the publication back; publishers, artists, would rather the books keep circulating.”

by Felicity Tayler

—  
 Quotes opposite:  
 Gina Badger, notes taken at  
 the meeting of the TXT–Canadian  
 Art Publishing Network  
 Meeting, November 7–8, 2014,  
 Artexte, Montréal.

DISTRIBUTION REMAINS an ongoing challenge for artist-run publishers, even those who have commercial distribution. This is complicated by the non-standardization of production methods and format choices in visual arts publishing, which makes it difficult for many amazing projects to circulate and attract diversified reading publics. Whereas “dissemination” is a term that has long been used to articulate a goal of cultural policy, it implies the sustained promotion of artistic experience, without reliance upon feedback from an audience. The concept of “circulation,” on the other hand, is better suited to the networked effects through which cultural expression spreads in the digital era; for instance, it acknowledges that publics have agency within the networked processes by which art publications become visible and gain value over time.

This essay is followed by a reprint of Esther Vincent’s talk “Networking and Distribution: It Doesn’t Happen by Itself.” Speaking from her perspective as president of the now-defunct Marginal Distribution (Peterborough), she emphasizes the publisher’s active role to ensure that books attract a public, or, as she states, “finding a place for your book and getting it there.” Vincent explains that there is an advantage to knowing where you will locate your book right from the start, as this will

determine who ultimately buys or reads it. Vincent also offers insight into why the book industry has imposed strict formats and policies with the goal of streamlining dissemination through the mechanism of sales. She also offers hints on how to visualize an intended niche public, and then manage the project in order to attract this public, making sure the resources are in place for sustained promotion, a typically underestimated facet of publishing projects.

Distribution systems have tended toward consolidation, with large e-commerce aggregators such as Amazon becoming near-monopolies in the field. Access to these systems can be expensive; in many cases the publisher must first pay for distribution service and also give a percentage of sales. In a sector where narrow (or non-existent) profit margins are the norm, the focus upon successful commercial distribution makes it harder to appreciate successful circulation that artist-run publishing projects have achieved. Often this occurs over many years, as these publications gained recognition through time-based processes, of which sales is only one of various outcomes. Many artist-run publishing projects are produced not only to achieve maximum and immediate sales or critical recognition, but also seek to have long-term impact on discursive

fields, such as art history, curatorial or cultural studies, through placement in the public collections of museums, archives and libraries. This is why, contrary to standards of commercial distribution chains, artist-run publishers who attend book fairs or who deposit books on consignment with independent bookstores don't want the publications returned to them. Booksellers typically return unsold copies of books to the distributor (or destroy them) after an agreed-upon time period; however, many artist-run publishers and artists would rather make connections for future collaborations by letting their books continue to circulate, often for free, hand to hand, reader to reader. Recent developments in self-archiving and long-term conservation of digital files increase further the potential for these anachronistic stocks of books to be rediscovered through search engines and social-media platforms.

If the work of circulation begins with producing a publication, it does not end when it is placed within a brick-and-mortar store or online sales platform. As Vincent states: "You need to support your book" by letting people know that your book exists and how to find it. Conventional modes of publicity (press releases, book launches) continue to create conditions of visibility; however, the network effects of

the digital era are contingent upon parallel visibility accrued through online platforms. The latter is achieved through the agency of the publics that the project attracts. Strategies for achieving visibility will be further discussed in “Resources and Resourcefulness.” ∞

#### FURTHER READINGS

- › <https://www.shopify.ca/guides>
- › <http://publishers.ca/index.php/resources/get-publicity>
- › <http://anel.qc.ca/perfectionnement/programme-dactivites/>

Esther Vincent, “Networking and Distribution: It Doesn’t Happen by Itself,” in *Tiré à part. Situer les pratiques d’édition des centres d’artistes. Off printing: Situating Publishing Practices in Artist-run Centres* (RCAAQ, 2005).

Networking and  
Distribution: It Doesn't  
Happen by Itself



by Esther Vincent

IT HAS been a privilege to take part in this conference and it has been exciting and inspiring to see and hear about all of the activity that is going on with publishing in artist-run centres.

I come to this conference with two parallel backgrounds. The first is in my capacity as a professional bookseller. The other is through my involvement with artist-run centres. My mother, Bernice Vincent, was one of the first members of the Forest City Gallery, in London, Ontario, so I spent my youth from earliest memory playing in the gallery during openings and events. Most recently I have been a member of an artist-run theatre and am currently working with others to establish a multi-use artist-run centre in Peterborough, Ontario. However, it is the first capacity that brings me to this conference. Specifically, my experience operating Marginal Distribution, a national book distribution company which specialises in representing independent and small press publishers as well as carrying titles from several artist-run centres.

Marginal Distribution was opened in 1985 by three people who, dissatisfied with the book company they were working for, decided to start their own. Their focus was on politics, art and music. Bookselling is a difficult,

time consuming and barely rewarding business. And over the next four years, two of the three owners left the company, and ultimately the remaining owner had had enough of the book industry and sold. The second owner of the company took over the book side of the business and the original owner kept the music portion. Eventually the second owner, too, became disenchanted and decided that it was time to leave the book industry. That was when my partner and I purchased the business to try our hand at making it work. We continued to sell books on politics, pop culture, and cultural theory as well as publications and book-works produced by artist-run centres.

It has not been an easy time in the book industry. Two years before we purchased Marginal, Canada's two major bookselling chains, Coles and Smithbooks (W. H. Smith), were bought and merged to form Chapters. This merger was a shock to the book industry and the aggressive business tactics of this new, very large company drove many small booksellers out of business. In the first six months after we purchased Marginal, 16 of our independent bookstore customers declared bankruptcy or otherwise closed their doors. In the months and years after, many other independent store owners left the business, citing burn-out and the changing

economic climate as their most common reasons. We, too, have reached our limit and, in fact, have just sold Marginal to another company. We have had the good fortune to find a company that is willing to take over the operational aspects of the business while we are able to continue with the company in the capacity of catalogue editors, product developers, marketers, and consultants.

This, we hope, will give us the time to work on the tasks which actually get books into stores.

This brings me to the question that I am here to answer. How does one get a book into a bookstore?

I have been listening to the various panel discussions over the last two days and the subject of distribution has come up in just about every case. There seems to be an impression that all a book needs is distribution and it will fly off the shelves. I've heard it said many times that "a book has a life of its own." But if this life is to sit in a box on a shelf, that is not much of a life. It is true that a book is an event and an object. It can be a work of art in and of itself, but as you all know, no work of art is going to be noticed without exposure. The same is true for books. You need to support your book, the same way you

would support a work of art, a video, or a performance.

This means that you have to find a place for your book and you have to get it there. Your distributor may do this for you, but they have dozens or sometimes, as in our case, hundreds of other books to sell, so your book is only going to get so much attention. In order to really do your book justice, you personally have to give it as much attention and assistance as you are able.

This has to happen before you even put pen to paper. The way you produce your book will have an enormous effect on who will pick it up, how it will be displayed, and ultimately, on who will buy it. Right now in the book industry things are so streamlined, and policies are so tight, that books have to adhere to a very strict format in order to find their way onto shelves. A book is most likely to be picked up if it has an ISBN, a bar-code on the back, and a fat spine with the title and author clearly displayed. Also, the production has to be accessible and attractive. If the book comes with information about a marketing campaign and especially if there's an author's tour it will be even more attractive.

This is not to say that you must forgo your dream of making the world's most

innovative art book project that will be years ahead of its time. But as with all things that fit that bill, it probably won't sell. If what you want is to sell your book, then you have to consider your book production plans, your booksellers, and your market, the end reader who you want to take your book home. Design and produce your book for that person. Figure out how many people are out there who want to read what you have to say and produce that many copies. And then find out where those kinds of people go and display your book there.

After that, follow up on the progress. Send your book out to book reviewers in magazines, newspapers, and radio. Hand-sell your book at events and openings. Arrange to have your author, artist, subject, or exhibit to do a tour. Tell bookstores in the cities where the events are going to happen and give them enough notice (at least six weeks) so that they can be sure to have your book in stock. Ask bookstore owners if they would be willing to host an event centred around your book.

It is time consuming and requires a great deal of commitment. And yes, this is what I try to do for each book I represent, but with three to four hundred new titles added to our catalogue annually, this

kind of individual attention is not possible. I always tell my publishers that they have to follow up on much of the promotion themselves.

That said, I will be continuing in my capacity as consultant with Marginal for some time to come. I am always on the other end of the phone or e-mail. A large part of my job is to answer questions and to give advice, so I extend the offer to everyone here. If you have an idea, a concern, or a book to promote, please feel free to give me a call. I will be happy to tell you whatever I can.

I look forward to hearing from you and to seeing your publications. ∞

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Esther Vincent, "Networking and Distribution: It Doesn't Happen by Itself," in *Tiré à part. Situer les pratiques d'édition des centres d'artistes. Off printing: Situating Publishing Practices in Artist-run Centres* (RCAAQ, 2005). Reproduced by permission of author and publisher.



# Material Conditions

“The publication IS the artistic medium.”

“Deeply invested in writing in connection to visual arts ... looking at the book as a medium itself and recognizing its heightened popularity in and outside of the art world.”

“A few centres support publishing in all forms as part of their services to artists, curators and as a contribution to the knowledge economy.”

“Authors who were able to support themselves or their families through their writing have been sufficiently rare in Canada to become the subject of gossip and legend.”

## by Felicity Tayler

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First two quotes opposite:  
Eryn Foster, notes taken at the  
Art Publishing Forum, *East of  
There*, June 23, 2013, Saint  
John, New Brunswick.

Third quote opposite:  
Gina Badger, notes taken at  
the meeting of the TXT–Cana-  
dian Art Publishing Network  
Meeting, November 7–8, 2014,  
Artexte, Montréal.

Fourth quote opposite:  
Frank Davey, “Economics and  
the Writer.”

THIS ESSAY considers the unstable economics of writing and publishing both within and beyond artist-run culture. In Canada and Québec, fiction and non-fiction writers must learn to navigate the standard practices of multiple publishing milieus, all the while augmenting this activity with other sources of income. The essay “Economics and the Writer,” reproduced here, provides an overview of the systemic challenges involved and the adaptability required in pursuing a writing and publishing career. Longevity in the field requires opportunities for national and international circulation. The essay’s author, Frank Davey, is an academic, poet and small-press publisher who developed his career throughout the same late-twentieth-century period during which artist-run culture took form.

Davey’s essay allows present-day challenges in artist-run publishing to be understood as an extension of historical processes of systemic inequalities in domestic and international trade. These challenges are more often framed in terms of the impact that digital technologies have had upon traditional publishing sectors, implying that adapting to the digital media environment is the common-sense solution for success. Davey’s essay shows that this narrative of technological determinism deflects attention from the role of public funding for the

arts in ensuring freedom of expression in a democratic tradition. This relationship between public funding and freedom of expression will be further expanded upon in the essays “Moral and Legislative Economies of Artist-Run Publishing” and “Situating Artist-Run Publishing Within Digital Culture.”

Many of the statistical patterns Davey discusses mirror the data gathered in a recent survey, *Waging Culture: A Report on the Socio-Economic Status of Canadian Visual Artists* (2012). Essentially, these statistics show that the economics of artist-run publishing are dependent upon a complex combination of competition for public funding, sales and reproduction and exhibition fees paid to the artist or author for permission to use their intellectual property.

- Receiving a grant is positively correlated to receiving artist’s fees. The relationship between grants and sales is less direct. Grants do not increase recipients’ living standards so much as buy time and resources for studio practice. Small grants (up to \$5k) buy a little time in the studio; larger grants buy both time and resources.
- The typical (median) artist’s annual income was \$21,603, compared to the typical (median) national income of \$31,320.

- 54% of visual artists generated income from studio practice. However, the typical (median) artist made \$360 from studio practice.

- 41% of a typical artist’s studio revenue is from sales, 43% from grants and 16% from artist fees.

- In 2012, the average artist worked 24 hours per week on studio practice, 17 hours on art-related employment, and 8 hours on non-art-related employment.

- In the 2007 version of the same survey, 65% of artists considered spousal support necessary to cover basic living expenses.

Davey’s essay likewise recognizes that most writers, even when widely published and translated into multiple languages, need to augment their income through spousal support, patron relations, related work (freelance journalism, editorial positions, academic tenure), or non-related work. Public funding and arms-length agencies such as the CBC, Radio-Canada and the National Film Board emerged in the twentieth century as essential employers for writers (and artists) as they pursued parallel careers.

Davey also emphasizes the importance of copyright legislation to the economic life of the writer, as it is the source of the royalties (or artist’s fees) that compensate the



writer as their work continues to circulate. Significantly, Davey stresses that copyright legislation was strongly influenced in the late twentieth century by the advocacy of writers' unions and professional associations. This trend is paralleled in the visual arts by the advocacy and fee scales developed by groups such as Canadian Artists Representation/le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC) and its Québec counterpart, Regroupement des artistes en arts visuels (RAAV).

Davey ultimately cautions that the role of contests and prizes has not been to secure a living wage for writers in Canada, but rather to gain visibility for sponsors; likewise, he suggests that individual grants to writers are conceived of as a reprieve from otherwise participating in the labour force.

Many artists explore literary writing modes within their creative work; however, when artists pursue writing as a form of supplementary employment related to their visual arts practices, they are generally writing in non-fiction genres, or creative non-fiction (i.e., exhibition catalogue essays, criticism, reviews). This is why it is possible for funders to classify artists as non-fiction writers (critics), rather than as authors who are producing comparable genres to prose

fiction or poetry in a literary field. This distinction can be frustrating to artists and visual arts publishers, who wish to be funded for their creative exploration of the discursive properties of a non-fiction publishing or writing genre *as an artistic medium*. Or, in poetic terms, the book as a unit of composition.

For some artists and writers, this overlap between visual arts and textual production is not simply a means of supplementary employment, but has actually produced a genre of art writing, which the poet Lisa Robertson describes as a parallel text tradition:

There's a tradition of art writing in Canada that gave me the space to develop what I do—it used to be called the parallel text tradition. One created a text that was parallel to an artistic practice by discussing with the artist, by taking on some of the artist's research materials and research means, and making a textual object which could parallel the installation or video or painting—whatever the medium was. That's being going on in Canada at least since the '80s. In recent years, in the international art world, art writing has been developing as a genre, and it seems to basically resemble what I understand to be the parallel text tradition that we have in Canada. And so the kind of writing that I do for art has been welcomed more widely. ∞

## FURTHER READINGS

Frank Davey, “Economics and the Writer,” in *History of the Book in Canada*, volume 3, edited by Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon (University of Toronto Press, 2007).

*Waging Culture: A Report on the Socio-Economic Status of Canadian Visual Artists* (AGYU, 2012).

► <http://theagyuisoutthere.org/everywhere/?tag=waging-culture>

“Lisa Robertson on Close Listening,” interviewed by Charles Bernstein on Jacket2, PennSound.

► <http://jacket2.org/commentary/lisa-robertson-close-listening>

*Traversals: Five Conversations on Art & Writing*, ed. Anna-Sophie Springer (Berlin: K. Verlag, 2011–14).

Anne-Marie Ninacs, “Écrire sur une œuvre ou faire œuvre d’écriture? Quelques réflexions sur la place des auteurs au sein des centres d’artistes,” in *Tiré à part. Situer les pratiques d’édition des centres d’artistes. Off printing: Situating Publishing Practices in Artist-run Centres* (RCAAQ, 2005).



# Economics and the Writer

by Frank Davey

AUTHORS WHO were able to support themselves or their families through their writing have been sufficiently rare in Canada to become the subject of gossip and legend. Charles G. D. Roberts has been cited as such a writer, although throughout the 1920s he was recurrently in debt and in 1931 he was rescued from poverty by supporters who obtained for him a government pension.<sup>1</sup> Al Purdy has been described as self-supporting, although in the 1940s and 1950s his wife, Eurithe, provides significant household income, and from the late 1960s most of his earnings came from grants and positions as a writer-in-residence, rather than from sales of his poetry.<sup>2</sup> Apart from journalists and a few novelists, such as L. M. Montgomery, Mazo de la Roche, Gabrielle Roy, and Yves Thériault, who achieved international success and benefited from royalties earned by foreign sales and film rights, most Canadian writers in the 1920–1980 period needed to augment substantially their earnings from writing in order to meet life's basic needs. The biography of Leslie McFarlane, best known for ghost-writing many titles in the Hardy Boys series, illustrates the energy and versatility required of a “journeyman writer” whose goal of maintaining middle-class family comfort led him to the editorial offices of the National Film Board and the CBC.<sup>3</sup> Two best-selling non-fiction authors of the post-war era, Farley Mowat and Pierre

Berton, first achieved financial stability through print journalism before branching into book publication, and parlaying their distinctive personalities into public images with media appeal.

#### INCOME FROM WRITING

Government methods of reporting the income of writers during much of the period under discussion make it difficult to establish definitive financial figures for those engaged in a writing life of any description. From 1921 to 1961, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics (later Statistics Canada) grouped the earnings of editors and reporters with those of writers engaged in all other forms of writing activity. Reporting improved somewhat in 1971, when the census divided "Occupations in writing" into three categories, "Writers and editors," "Translators and interpreters," and "Occupations in writing, n.e.c. [not elsewhere classified]." The difficulty with these categories is that they could as easily include writers of advertising copy as writers of articles and books.

Hard figures on the state of professional authorship are to be derived from a Statistics Canada study of 1978, the precision of which underlines the inadequacy of earlier statistics.<sup>4</sup> In 1978, the median

income for all members of the Canadian labour force was \$11,400. Writers surveyed for this study reported an average income from writing of \$6,761 with a median of \$2,500. Those writing full-time had an average income of \$14,095 with a median of \$7,000, while for part-time writers the average was \$3,628 and the median of \$1,380.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the study's analysis of full-time writers by genre revealed significant disparities in all categories between the average reported income and the median: book sales (\$6,077 and \$1,050), sales to periodicals (\$4,392 and \$2,500), sales to radio and television (\$13,591 and \$6,000), writing for cinema (\$8,710 and \$2,000), and writing for the theatre (\$3,110 and \$800). The striking differences between the average and the median indicate that the former was being elevated by a few exceptionally well-paid individuals, and that most writers surveyed were earning considerably less than the "average."

Anecdotal sources offer significant insights, if not comprehensive data, about the finances of Canadian writers during the twentieth century. E. K. Brown declared in 1938 that the economic base of literature in Canada was "unsound," and that the only three options for Canadian writers were to emigrate, take secondary employment, or "while continuing to

reside in Canada, become, economically at least, a member of another nation and civilization,” and that none of these was likely to lead to substantial *Canadian* literary production.<sup>6</sup> Reflecting on both commercial and literary writing in 1955, publisher John Morgan Gray estimated that a Canadian writer selling to American mass-market magazines could earn more than \$18,000 a year, a significant income at that time. However, a best-selling Canadian novel would bring its author only \$1,000 to \$1,500, unless it found a publisher in Britain and the United States, in which case it would produce “much more satisfactory” returns.<sup>7</sup> Yet, the experience of Hugh MacLennan reveals that exceptionally lucrative writing did not necessarily provide financial independence. Although his *Barometer Rising* (1941) was a best-seller in Canada, the United States, and Britain, the Canadian government taxed his foreign earnings so heavily that MacLennan was unable to leave his teaching post. In addition, in the 1940s Canadian taxation laws did not allow a writer to spread a book’s earnings over several tax years, even though the volume might have taken several years to write. Consequently, although MacLennan’s *Two Solitudes* (1945) also proved an international best-seller, by March 1946 the book had earned him \$3,354.21 in secondary rights and \$12,000

in royalties after taxes.<sup>8</sup> A year later, Gabrielle Roy fared much better with secondary rights, receiving \$67,000 for the film rights to *The Tin Flute*, and 50 per cent of the \$110,000 reprint fee paid by the Literary Guild of New York, a book club that ordered 700,000 copies.<sup>9</sup>

Genre has been a considerable factor in Canadian writers’ incomes. Journalism, especially salaried work for a newspaper or magazine, has provided much economic security for writers. As an alternative to full-time employment, print journalists have sometimes done part-time or freelance writing, producing a regular column for a particular newspaper or magazine, or undertaking journalistic writing in tandem with creative writing. Freelance or salaried writing for film, radio, and television also paid the bills. Journalism has been a significant component in the writing careers of authors ranging from Pierre Berton and Scott Young to poets Clément Marchand and Jovette Bernier. For poets, public readings became a significant source of income during the 1970s, welcome compensation from a genre for which royalties remained minimal.

For playwrights, there were very few sources of income until the establishment of public broadcasting in the 1930s, which led to the purchasing and

commissioning of radio plays and, later, television scripts. In Québec, the need for French-language radio and television programs created lucrative opportunities for several writers whose novels became serial dramas broadcast from the 1930s through the 1960s—Claude-Henri Grignon's *Un homme et son péché* (1933) and Roger Lemelin's *Les Plouffe* (1948). In the 1970s, Victor-Lévy Beaulieu continued this pattern by adapting many of his novels for the small screen. Authors for children, such as Tante Lucille (Lucille Desparois), Grand-Père Cailloux (André Cailloux), Maman Fonfon (Claudine Vallerand), and Henriette Major, also adapted their stories for radio and television. After 1960, the vitality of live and televised theatre in Québec enabled several francophone playwrights, including Marcel Dubé, Françoise Loranger, and Michel Tremblay, to live off their royalties. In English Canada, script-writing for the CBC was a major source of income for Gwethalyn Graham from 1958 to 1965, while the proliferation of small theatre companies in the late 1960s and 1970s enabled popular playwrights, such as David French, to acquire a liveable annual income from repeated performances, both national and international.

An intermittent and unreliable source of income for writers has arisen out of

contests and prizes, the impact of which is discussed in greater detail by Marie-Pier Luneau and Ruth Panofsky later in this chapter. After the First World War, the earliest recorded annual prizes were the Concours littéraires et scientifiques du Québec (first awarded in 1923), known as the Prix David, and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) Awards for the short story and one-act play (1923–33). Although prizes have been relatively numerous—Statistics Canada reported in 1976 that Canada had as many literary and journalistic prizes as did each of Britain, Austria, and Switzerland (but fewer than France)<sup>10</sup>—the vast majority offered less than \$1,000. Some lucrative prizes did become available in the 1970s, when the Governor General's Award was raised to \$5,000 in 1975 and the Seal First Novel Award of \$50,000 was established in 1976. Apart from the Seal award, prizes have not been conceptualized as purchasing time for writers to create. While many early contests sponsored by newspapers or magazines encouraged new writers and provided a bit of income for the winners (for example, the *Maclean's Magazine* Short Story Awards, 1927–55), their purpose was also to create a news event for the sponsor. Later prizes, such as the Ryerson Fiction Awards (1942–60), the Doubleday Canadian Prize Novel Award (1961–67), the Seal, and the Prix



du Cercle du livre de France (1949–87), generated publicity for book publishers and often encouraged more substantial sales—and therefore greater royalties—for winning authors.

Newer resources for writers arose from various state interventions, many directly or indirectly resulting from the Massey Report of 1951 and the subsequent creation of the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957. Further improvements to the economic situation of writers developed through a series of post-1960 government inquiries—into culture, copyright, the arts, publishing, and what became known as the “cultural industries.” Juried granting programs, offering monies to writers on the basis of past accomplishment and programs of current work, were first introduced by the Canada Council in 1960, and replicated by several provincial arts councils founded soon afterward (Ontario in 1963, Manitoba in 1965). These grants offered writers substantial blocks of unencumbered time. During the 1960s, however, these programs were relatively small; H. R. Percy complained in 1964 that only \$30,000 of the Canada Council’s 1962–63 grant budget of \$1.6 million had gone to writers—an amount equal to the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra’s grant that same year.<sup>11</sup> In the mid-1960s, the Canada Council created further

initiatives: its Writer-in-Residence Program, which is described in the following case study by Nancy Earle; its funding of public readings; and its grants to Canadian periodicals and book publishers, which in later years would require publishers to pay royalties to authors. The council’s financial support of new writers’ organizations, such as the Writers’ Union of Canada (WUC), the Union des écrivains québécois (UNÉQ), and the League of Canadian Poets, led indirectly to greater income from public readings, to contract reform, and to progress toward the public lending right and copyright collectives, both of which would become significant sources of income for writers in the 1990s. By the early 1970s, the number of granting agencies had multiplied, and the funds available had greatly increased. For example, many writers in this decade were eligible for grants from the federal Local Initiatives Program and Opportunities for Youth; in some provinces, younger writers could count on up to four years of continuous grant support. As well, the Canada Council Public Readings Program enabled popular writers—Susan Musgrave and Al Purdy among them—to give up to twenty council-funded readings per year at universities and public libraries, and additional readings through the council-funded League of Canadian Poets.

In the late 1960s writers' manuscripts and other archival materials became another potential source of income. While a few university libraries had accepted occasional donations before this period, the systematic building of Canadian manuscript collections for research purposes did not begin until Canadian literature was established as a doctoral program field. The first significant purchase by the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto was an accession of Earle Birney's papers in 1966. The National Library of Canada's collection began with the Arthur Bourinot fonds in 1969. The University of Calgary inaugurated its Canadian Collection, described in the following case study by Apollonia Steele, with the purchase of Hugh MacLennan's papers in 1973.

Most acquisitions of writers' papers in the 1965–80 period were by purchase rather than donation. This was partly because federal tax provisions regarding the donations of literary materials were unfavourable until the Cultural Property Export and Import Act of 1975 (23-4 Elizabeth 2, 1975, c. 50) came into effect in 1977. For income tax purposes, cash sales before 1977 were treated as capital gains. Under the 1975 legislation, the appraised value of manuscripts sold or donated was exempt from capital gains tax and, in the case of

a donation, 100 per cent deductible from the writer's taxable income. However, a writer who donated under the act could, depending on his or her tax bracket, and the taxation rates of that year, receive at best 43–45 per cent of the appraised value. Under the somewhat less generous 1985 legislation, a writer who donates receives a tax credit of approximately 30 per cent of the appraised value.

Most writers, who do not have substantial incomes against which to use tax credits, have not benefited from the two cultural property acts, and have remained better off selling rather than donating their papers. A few who have built lucrative writing careers, or who have had high-paying secondary careers, have made better use of the acts—Margaret Atwood, for example, who sold her early manuscripts to the University of Toronto in 1969 and again in the early 1970s, has since made additional donations. In Québec, the selection of a home for a writer's papers can be a delicate topic. In 1980, after being courted by many institutions, Gabrielle Roy arranged for her papers to go to the National Library of Canada after her death, with posthumous payment to the Fonds Gabrielle Roy. The main beneficiaries of the federal legislation have been libraries, who, by negotiating various permutations of cash payment and tax

credits, have been able to acquire significant collections at very little expense to themselves and modest benefit to the writers.

#### OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME

Few Canadian authors of either language enjoyed the advantage of Alain Grandbois, whose personal wealth enabled him to travel the world and write to his own schedule. With the notable exceptions of journalists and a few commercially successful novelists, until 1960 Canada's best-known writers all followed other careers. The challenge for a writer was to find a congenial career that left time for writing, or that did not interfere, physically or psychologically, with the energy required to write.

For Canadian writers unable to live solely by their pens, principal areas of employment have been education, broadcasting, government, publishing, and the legal and medical professions. The cultural pattern of women beginning professional writing while living—and often raising children—in households nominally financed by their husbands existed throughout the period, as in the early years of the careers of Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Marian Engel, and Jane Urquhart. In the world of paid employment, even

journalists like Scott Young often had an editorial component built into their salaried positions. F. P. Grove taught public school from 1909 to 1923, failed as a farmer in southern Ontario in the early 1930s, and was then supported by his wife's private teaching. Lucie Robert has shown that in Québec, before 1920 writers' vocations were nearly equally divided between the Catholic Church and the professions (42.8 per cent) and teaching and journalism (43 per cent); after 1920, teaching and journalism prevailed (73 per cent).<sup>12</sup> Similar patterns of professionalism obtained in both language communities: Montreal poets F. R. Scott and A. M. Klein were practicing lawyers; Ringuet (Philippe Panneton) and Jacques Ferron were medical doctors. Québécois children's authors Marie-Claire Daveluy and Claude Aubry were librarians, while their anglophone counterpart Janet Lunn worked as an editor of children's books. Sinclair Ross and Raymond Souster, by contrast, held relatively low-level jobs in Canadian banks until retirement.

Authors found some of their most congenial livelihoods in broadcasting, film, and government. During the 1950s and the 1960s, many Québécois poets (Jean-Guy Pilon, Paul-Marie Lapointe, Fernand Ouellette) and novelists (Robert Charbonneau, Gilles Archambault,

André Langevin, Hubert Aquin, Wilfrid Lemoine) worked as producers, editors, or directors in radio or television for Radio-Canada, and Phyllis Webb was a producer with the English-language CBC radio and television, beginning in 1943 as a paid participant in various programs on current and cultural affairs, such as *Citizens' Forum*, *Fighting Words*, and *Now I Ask You*. In 1957, Jacques Godbout joined the National Film Board, where Anne Hébert worked briefly in 1953 and 1954, as had Leslie McFarlane and Irene Baird in the 1940s. Some writers worked in the civil service: Québec's Ministry of Cultural Affairs, established in 1961, created administrative positions in the arts and letters that were filled by poets and writers, while Naïm Kattan became head of the Canada Council's Writing and Publication Section in 1967.

For writers who placed their focus on an academic career, and whose primary output would be scholarly in nature—such as Northrop Frye, A. G. Bailey, and Roy Daniells—a university appointment was essential. Robertson Davies' twenty years as master of Massey College (1961–81) provided an opportunity for colourful leadership. However, university teaching was a mixed blessing for many creative writers. Following the examples of E. J. Pratt and A. J. M. Smith, and influenced

by the professionalizing of poetry and criticism by the New Critics, many English-speaking poets from the 1940s onward obtained tenured university positions—Earle Birney, Ralph Gustafson, Louis Dudek, James Reaney, and Eli Mandel foremost among them. The frustrations that a parallel career in the university could bring to creative writers were voiced by Birney, who in the late 1950s wrote several scholarly articles and won a Nuffield grant to complete a book on Chaucer, but complained to a friend that the “academic chains” were “almost crushing” and that he had “written nothing of a creative nature for nearly four years.” Yet Birney's academic post was a financial necessity: in 1957, when his salary rose from \$8,500 to \$10,000, his income from “royalties, radio work and permissions” was \$557.43.<sup>13</sup> Novelists were less likely to make long-term commitments to teaching—possibly because the genre requires long uninterrupted periods of writing, and possibly also because the economic potential of fiction was greater. Before 1980 male writers were more likely to secure university positions than were women, although in the 1970s they were joined by novelists Aritha Van Herk and Bharati Mukherjee.

With the tremendous expansion of post-secondary education across the

country in the 1960s, university or teaching careers, often part-time, became almost the norm for literary writers in both official languages. The growth of creative writing courses in universities in the 1960s and 1970s not only opened new employment opportunities for writers, but also guided many aspiring authors toward university study, thereby equipping them with credentials for at least the part-time teaching of creative writing or positions in community colleges. The many teaching positions opened by the initiation of Québec's CEGEPs in 1967 likewise produced good jobs for the generation of young poets who filled the little magazines and ran the new publishing houses of the 1970s.

**THE BUSINESS OF WRITING:  
COPYRIGHT, LITERARY AGENTS,  
AND CONTRACTS**

Copyright was a complicated business in Canada until 1911, when the United Kingdom passed a revised Copyright Act (1-2 George 5, c. 46), which allowed its "self-governing" dominions to repeal imperial copyright legislation and pass new legislation without the threat of imperial disallowance. Canada's first effective copyright act was realized a decade later, when a new act (11-12 George 5, c. 24) was passed in 1921 and proclaimed in 1924.

Although largely modelled on the British act of 1911, it gave Canadian authors important new protections, extending the term to life plus fifty years, granting protection to works by Canadians in other countries, granting authors various secondary rights such as film and radio adaptation, setting penalties of fines and/or imprisonment for infringement, and prohibiting the commercial importation of books into Canada to compete with Canadian-licensed printings. The act, however, also specifically denied that copyright was a "natural" right, declaring it to be only a creation of "statutory enactment"—a view that would be disputed in later copyright discussions.

While the act remained substantially unrevised for sixty years, copyright issues arose periodically. In 1928 Canada formally ratified the Rome text of the Berne Convention, a convention which respected copyrights internationally and to which Canada had become a member indirectly in 1886 through Britain's adhesion. In 1954 the St Laurent government appointed a Royal Commission on Patents, Copyright, Trade Marks, and Industrial Design, giving it a mandate to seek a balance between the rights of creators and the public benefits of access. The commission's report of 1957 had little effect on legislation, although its

recommendation that Canada join the Universal Copyright Convention was enacted in 1962, giving Canadian authors important “national-treatment” protections in the United States. In 1966 the Pearson government asked the Economic Council of Canada to undertake a further study, but with emphasis on economic policy and the well-being of consumers. The council’s 1971 *Report on Intellectual and Industrial Property*, while making significant mention of the cultural goals of copyright legislation, recommended that there be little change to present protections. Much more influential was the Keyes-Brunet report of 1977, *Copyright in Canada: Proposals for a Revision of the Law*, commissioned by the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, although it too did not lead—at least directly—to legislation. Keyes-Brunet argued that it was inconsequential whether copyright was a natural property right or a statutory privilege—effectively validating the former by the back door—and implied as well that the rights of the creator, together with the national cultural interest, could outweigh any right of public access. The Trudeau government’s response to Keyes-Brunet was the white paper *From Gutenberg to Telidon* (1984), which proposed to expand creators’ rights in the context of new technologies, to balance the rights of creators and the needs

of users, and to strengthen Canadian culture.

The election of the Mulroney government later that year resulted in the abrupt replacing of the white paper in 1985 with the *Charter of Rights for Creators*. The *Charter*, and subsequent copyright legislation, moved in much different directions, defining copyright as containing both property rights and moral rights, allowing corporations and co-operatives to possess such rights, expanding the rights of creators without expanding those of users, encouraging copyright collectives, and raising the financial penalties for infringement to a maximum of \$1 million dollars. While the federal government oversaw the collective rights of authors through copyright legislation, it was left to authors and their agents to monitor the copyright and other contractual arrangements made with publishers.

Before the 1970s, most of the literary agents who represented Canadian writers were based in New York, along with a few in London. In the 1920s and 1930s, the established agencies of A. P. Watt and Paul Reynolds represented best-selling writers like Robert Stead and Arthur Stringer.<sup>14</sup> Gabrielle Roy understood the importance of an agent; in 1945 she retained as her business manager Jean-Marie Nadeau,

a brilliant lawyer and copyright specialist, who for the next ten years expertly steered her professional transactions. In the early 1950s, Farley Mowat broke into the major American periodicals such as *Saturday Evening Post* under the guidance of a New York agency.<sup>15</sup> However, many American agents did not grasp the cultural or literary goals of their Canadian clients. MacLennan's agent, Blanche Gregory, advised him after the success of *Barometer Rising* to write articles for *Reader's Digest*, while Alice Munro's American agent, Virginia Barber, urged her to write novels instead of stories.<sup>16</sup>

Although a few Canadians advertised editorial and agency services in the *Canadian Author and Bookman* in the 1930s, probably the first anglophone Canadian literary agent of note was Matie Molinaro, who began working out of her Toronto home in 1950 and pioneered the concept of agents within Canadian publishing. Most of her business before 1970 focused on arranging lectures rather than placing manuscripts. With the expansion of writing and publishing in the 1970s, new agencies emerged, including those of Nancy Colbert and Lucinda Vardey, and book manuscripts and book contracts became agents' primary business. The new agencies helped to internationalize Canadian writing, it being more lucrative

for both writer and agent to place a manuscript first with an American publisher, and to split off the Canadian rights for separate sale and thus better domestic royalties. In the 1970s, John Goodwin was the agent for many internationally known francophone authors who were widely translated, including Marie-Claire Blais, Roch Carrier, and Michel Tremblay.<sup>17</sup>

Prior to the 1970s there had been very little change in publishing contracts in Canada—partly because there was so little money to be made in the Canadian market by either publisher or author, but also because few Canadian writers used literary agents. The introduction of agents caused an increase in the royalty advances paid by Canadian publishers and generated contracts that committed publishers to spending certain amounts on promotion. By contrast, the standard contracts of earlier years had been highly restrictive in favour of the publisher: they granted the publisher world rights rather than ones to particular markets, and substantial percentages of all possible subsidiary rights; they specified a deadline by which the author was to deliver the manuscript but no deadline by which the publisher was required to publish; they contained no reversion clause for the return of copyright to the author should the publisher allow the book to go out of print; and they

granted the publisher first refusal rights on the author's next book, regardless of its genre. The Canadian Authors Association (CAA) had routinely warned its members to challenge contract terms and, in the 1940s, at the initiative of Gwethalyn Graham developed its own "Standard Book Contract,"<sup>18</sup> which, however, received little acceptance. Small presses founded in the late 1960s and early 1970s frequently copied the established publishers' standard contracts, even though they had no staff or expertise for the sale and management of subsidiary rights, and no ability to distribute outside of Canada.

Although individual authors with access to lawyers were able to have contracts rewritten, it was through the efforts of the WUC and UNÉQ, as well as the interventions of agents, that industry-wide changes to publishing contracts began to be made in the 1970s. With better financing and more high-profile authors among its membership than the CAA, the WUC was able to publicize contract inequities, offer contract-evaluation services to members, and propose a set of "minimum terms," many of which became part of the WUC's own model contract and were widely adopted by publishers. These included a fixed date for the publisher to publish, fixed terms for subsidiary rights, and reversion of rights on a

work's going out of print.

The trajectory, over the course of the twentieth century, was clearly toward greater economic stability for Canada's writers. This development arose through increased sales of their work, and also through a growing infrastructure of support that included grants, congenial post-secondary teaching posts, employment in broadcasting and film agencies, and sales or donations of their papers to archives. These opportunities have been supported by a network of social and government commitments—at both federal and provincial levels—that underscore a belief that Canada's cultural industries are too important—and too fragile—to be left to the whims of the global marketplace. ∞

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# Moral and Legislative Economies of Artist- Run Publishing

"Cuts in funding meant new kinds of publishing formats that have consequently sold very well; reshaping the structures and formats of publishing; shorter runs; less expensive production; digital publications not yet investigated."

"We hand out a lot of publications for free, so it's clearly not primarily about revenue generation."

"Because margins are so small, most publishers do not solely operate as publishers, but run other business aspects such as a gallery."

"Most organizations present at the meeting are unable to pay artists' fees due to the extremely limited financial resources. While most organizations present at the meeting are unable to monetarily remunerate exhibiting artists, all organizations uphold as a value to remunerate artists for their work (through monetary, in-kind or service exchange), and no organization present at the meeting indicated that they charge artists to hold exhibitions."

## by Felicity Tayler

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Quotes opposite:

1. Eryn Foster, notes taken at the Art Publishing Forum, *East of There*, June 23, 2013, Saint John, New Brunswick

2. Gina Badger, notes taken at the meeting of the TXT–Canadian Art Publishing Network Meeting, November 7–8, 2014, Artex, Montreal.

3. Doug Sigurdson, notes from Consultation on Art Books in Canada, Visual Arts Section, The Canada Council for the Arts, June 18, 2012.

4. Mariane Bourcheix-Laporte, notes from the Pacific Association of Artist-Run Centres (PAARC) Meeting of Emerging and Developing Artist-Run Centres and Organizations, March 29, 2014, Vancouver.

THIS ESSAY proposes that artist-run publishing is presently responding to a legislative environment in which creative activity is defined as an economic resource, that is, as intellectual property, which necessitates an oppositional relationship between copyright owners and copyright users. Generally speaking, “authors” and “publishers” are names given to the owners of intellectual property, while “readers” or “audiences” are words used to describe the users of intellectual property. In the essay titled “Material Conditions”, we looked at how the economics of artist-run publishing depend upon a complex combination of competition for public funding, sales and reproduction and exhibition fees (royalties) paid to the artist or author for permission to use their intellectual property. In this essay, we begin to consider the tensions that arise when the cut-copy-and-paste logic, dialogic, pluralistic and participatory ideals of digital culture mean that the identity of an individual or publishing organization frequently oscillates between being the owner and the user of copyrighted content.

Digital culture encourages fragmentation and fluidity of identity across networked media platforms. Print and other analog media continue to be important venues for expression, as they complement the unique capacities of digital technologies. At times, print culture can also

offer a space of resistance to digital culture's tendency to value speed and quantity of consumption over engagement with content. In a similar manner to these overlaps of media spaces, the tendency toward mutable identities echoes a long-term critical interest, shared between artists and writers, in exploring how language and socio-economic systems structure our sense of self and activities in daily life. Lorna Brown has described the experience of working in artist-run culture, for instance, with an emphasis upon how "economic context and fluid practices have led to multiple public identities, a categorical impurity."

Advocates of cultural policy in the digital era often espouse ideals such as open access, transparency and participatory modes of engagement; however, the cumulative effects of austerity budgets in the arts, education and research has produced a paradoxical restriction upon the sharing of publicly-funded cultural expression. This restricted access arises due to the pressure to generate "new revenue streams" by monetizing access to these cultural objects, as Rosemary J. Coombe, Darren Wershler and Martin Zeilinger, scholars of the political economy of digital culture, have observed. These scholars also provocatively argue that, "the replacement of public funding with the

rhetoric of cultural industry" is a sign that a society is having difficulty adapting to the democratic potential of an open, participatory digital culture. The field of artist-run publishing is particularly affected by this paradox, as it has conventionally conceived of its products and purpose to be a public good, a dematerialized art object, a practice of community building, of knowledge sharing, or as a "gift" to readers involved in an economy based on non-monetary and non-reciprocal exchange (a gift economy). From this point of view, robust public funding ensures that the arts can continue to perform this democratic function—that of creating publics—as it removes economic barriers to the circulation and sharing of content.

Because of its historic role as a funder of both publishers and artist-run culture in this country, it could be said that the Canada Council for the Arts occupies a symbolic place in the imaginations of aspiring artist-led publishers. In 2014, ARCA commissioned a study in response to a complaint common among artist-run centres, that the Canada Council's support for their publications had diminished since the year 2000. ARCA's report seemed to suggest that due to several program changes over the years (in both the Visual Arts and the Writing and Publishing sections), artist-run centres

found it difficult to gain eligibility for additional funding programs in cases where projects were conceived of as publications, such as artists' books or exhibition catalogues. When the Council's New Funding Model comes into effect in 2017, literary publishing will be explicitly separated from visual arts publishing. Furthermore, eligibility will no longer emphasize the form, medium, or genre that an organization or artist selects for a proposed project. Instead, an organization will be defined by its primary mandate (exhibitor or visual arts publisher), while eligibility for either project-based or operational funding will be determined according to an array of activities that have various creative modes, which may, in turn, constitute different publics. Artist-led publishing may thus be one among multiple "activities" in which an artist-run centre may engage as a creative mode and as a means to create publics. While the long-term effects of these changes remain to be seen, the new model does hold out promise for greater flexibility in responding to how artist-led publishing works as a creative practice.

In the meantime, when the legislative frameworks of intellectual property law, and related public funding policies are perceived to restrict or shut down cultural exchange, "moral economies" can arise to

take their place. The *affective labour* practiced in creative milieus such as artist-run culture can lead to the development of parallel moral economies in which acceptable practices are determined not by law, but based upon community consensus and self-policing. Affective labour encompasses all the personal relations and ethical negotiations that go into maintaining good feelings, conviviality, or establishing a sense of community between those who work for the artist-run publisher and the people who have agreed to provide a service for the duration of the publishing project (editorial, translation, design) or content (research, writing, images). Affective labour is also a significant part of creating long-term distribution networks for these works.

It could be said, then, that publishing in artist-run culture mobilizes both *creative labour* and *affective labour*. Because publishing projects tend to be irregular, the creative labour is often done on a freelance or contractual basis. Frequently unaccounted for, affective labour is crucial to ensuring that these publishing projects cohere, reach completion and then circulate widely.

**COPYRIGHT AS A PRACTICE OF  
DAILY LIFE FOR ARTISTS AND  
ARTIST-RUN PUBLISHERS**

Artist-run culture and the related publishing milieu is disproportionately left-leaning or anarchist in its politics, and often understands aesthetics to intersect with social justice issues. Its moral economies are preoccupied with the ethics of representation and cultural appropriation in the content of work, and also extend to concerns that the writer/artist be fairly compensated for their creative labour. Historically, copyright legislation has been an imperfect mechanism for achieving this latter goal. However, much contemporary art and writing is now recombinant in content and form, as the works cite previous avant-garde or conceptual movements and/or rummage through the remnants of the media archives of a dominant culture. This double-role of artist as both user and creator of copyrighted content can pose inconvenient challenges to the principles underlying artists' and writers' claims to economic rights. The next essay will address the concepts of *fair dealing* and the *public domain* as exceptions to the binary dynamic of owner/user and permissions/compensation, which structures intellectual property law.

All expressions of ideas that are fixed in

a form such as a text or an image are automatically copyrighted under Canadian law. Within this legislative framework, creative labour is considered to be a limitless resource. Copyright is the legal mechanism by which the limitlessness of ideas can be transformed into intellectual property, which can be contractually negotiated for exchange. *All contractual arrangements are open to negotiation*, but there is a history of collective action and advocacy by writers' and artists' associations that has set guidelines and tacit rules of conduct for how these negotiations take place in artist-run culture.

*Reproduction fees* (royalties) are paid to artists for their contribution of visual material to artist-run publishing. This compensation is based in the assumption that the image is documentation, or the reproduction of an art object that exists elsewhere. These fees are standardized according to a Minimum Fee Schedule jointly negotiated on behalf of all visual and media artists in Canada by CARFAC and in Québec by RAAV. Canada's federal Status of the Artist legislation and Québec's Loi sur le statut de l'artiste give these organizations the legal status to negotiate working conditions for visual artists. In practice, the payment of these fees is inconsistent across publishing contexts.

The core of these minimum-fee schedules is the special category of *exhibition rights*, which Parliament added to the Copyright Act in 1988, in recognition of the precarious economics of labour in the visual arts. The exhibition right is based on the assumption that visual artists produce unique or limited-edition objects. Unlike writing, these cultural objects do not reach an audience through mass publication; instead, their circulation relies upon repeated acts of public exhibition. The exhibition right applies only in contexts that are publicly funded, and does not set the conditions for contexts where art works are for sale. Since 1975, the payment of these reproduction and exhibition fees has been consistently enforced in artist-run culture, since it is an eligibility requirement for the programs that support ARCs' operating budgets at the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. Funders do not specify which fee schedules need to be applied, however!

Fee schedules for the visual arts do not cover related activities such as writing and publishing. A comparison could be made, nonetheless, between the genres of writing produced in artist-run culture and a fee schedule prepared by the Professional Writers Association of Canada (PWAC),

which represents the interests of non-fiction writers (e.g., \$0.30–\$2.00 per word in “special interest magazines,” or \$30–\$60 per hour for editing).

The contracts most often adopted by artist-run publishers—because they are promoted by CARFAC, RCAAQ and RAAV—recommend freelance writers grant the publisher a one-time publication license, in one language only, in return for publication rights typically paid in the form of a flat fee based on word count. Authors (who are often also artists) generally retain copyright on the texts they produce, a position in keeping with advocacy for artists to retain their rights for exhibiting works. Authors remain free to grant further reproduction or translation rights, or not to, according to terms of compensation agreed upon in negotiation with a publisher. For instance, there may be a clause in the contract that grants permission for the publisher to give free online access to the work in PDF format. While it may at first seem beneficial for authors to retain all of their rights, there are consequences. For instance, it means that artist-run publishers have the potential to generate revenue through initial sales of the publication, but have little financial incentive to pursue subsequent reprints, translations, or transpositions to other media platforms. It also means that access to the text may be

restricted because it does not (legally) circulate through digital networks.

Reproduction royalties from *copyright collectives* such as Copyright Visual Arts/Droits d'auteur Arts visuels (formerly known as CARCC), SODRAC, Access Copyright and Copibec are paid to authors or publishers based on the individually negotiated terms of reproduction license agreements and according to collective agreements regarding compensation for reproductions used in educational settings and libraries. Authors and publishers must be registered with such copyright collective societies in order to receive their royalties.

The purpose of copyright collective societies is to represent the interests of copyright owners. These societies can also make it easier for a user to gain permission to reuse copyrighted material, a time-consuming and difficult process if the copyright owner is undisclosed or hard to find. However, while many copyright owners might give permission to use their material with little or no remuneration, these societies tend to restrict access in order to increase revenue. For instance, we initially contacted Frank Davey for permission to reprint his essay, "Economics and the Writer," along with its French translation. Davey approved

the reprint because he was pleased that an academic text would reach a new public through this alternate publishing context. Nonetheless, we also contacted Access Copyright and Copibec to secure permission from the publisher, who retained the reproduction rights. In the end, the University of Toronto Press gave us permission directly to reprint the original English-language text on the condition that they be compensated \$150; Copibec, for its part, representing Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, required a \$300 fee for permission to reprint the French-language translation. ∞



## FURTHER READINGS

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# Situating Artist-Run Publishing Within Digital Culture

“Publishing a collection of essays in the form of a final publication that is given away as a gift, published as a limited-edition publication, then still accessed free in the form of a PDF online.”

“Using the publication as a gift, a calling card, an archive; shorter print-run costs, but does not eliminate the physical object.”

“Not enough time is spent discussing the actual conservation of books. [A participant] advocated that one copy be held in all universities and important libraries across the country. There is an illusionary market that includes giving books away, but there is also the library to consider.”

## by Felicity Tayler

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First two quotes opposite:  
Eryn Foster, notes taken at  
the Art Publishing Forum, *East  
of There*, June 23, 2013, Saint  
John, New Brunswick.

Third quote opposite:  
Doug Sigurdson, notes from  
Consultation on Art Books in  
Canada, Visual Arts Section,  
The Canada Council for the  
Arts, June 18, 2012.

THIS ESSAY will take the concept of the *public domain* as a starting point to reflect upon why publishing in artist-run centres is sometimes conceived of as contributing to a gift economy that does not follow a market-based model of commodity exchange. Instead, artist-run publishing is idealized as an act of sharing resources, or as the circulation of ideas as an unlimited resource. When this kind of language is used to describe artist-run publishing, it suggests that this milieu shares a “structure of feeling” with counter-publics arising within digital culture, including those drawn to the open-access, open-source software, or Creative Commons movements.

Raymond Williams’ term “structure of feeling” is used here to describe technologically enabled shifts in social organization that conflict with formalized legal structures. In artist-run culture, a sense of community is often formed through a process of self-identification with an avant-garde, artistic tradition invested in communications technologies and countercultural positions. Utopian movements arising from digital culture can similarly be understood as extensions of countercultural strategies of self-organization fuelled by sensations of affective belonging. “Digital culture” can sometimes be used as a term to describe a mediated social

environment which arises as content circulates as binary code through electronic networks—the focus in this discourse are the functions of digital platforms. It should be clear by now that this *Guide* considers digital culture to be intrinsically bound up with a physical world in which multiple communications technologies, including the internet, shape cultural content and social settings. Recourse to older print media forms, or to cross-platform publishing projects can offer a post-digital mode of resistance to ideologies that promote the immaterial structures of digital networks without consideration of material and human resources costs or negative social effects.

In a digital environment where the ease of cut-copy-and-paste makes appropriation a common grammar, legal scholars and cultural critics have suggested that the restriction of public funding to artists and arts organizations can be likened to a restriction of freedom of expression. Forcing artists and artist-run publishers to prioritize private means of revenue—that is, gallery sales of objects, sales of books or magazine subscriptions, and fees or royalties derived from copyright—has the consequence of restricting the circulation of ideas and cultural objects. These economic conditions limit freedom of expression in a digital culture in which

copying, sharing and collaboration are forms of speech, thought and identity. It can be argued that these limits constrain artists' ability to perform their democratic function, which is to create a plurality of publics of many different sizes and concerns.

#### FAIR DEALING IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

The *public domain* is a conceptual space, upheld in liberal democracies, which includes all forms of creative expression that lack commodity status because copyright has expired or does not apply. This means there is no copyright owner from whom permission must be requested or who must be compensated for the use of this material. The function of the public domain is to allow artists, authors and their heirs to benefit economically from their creative labour for a limited time, but also to recognize that there is a social benefit derived from longer-term, unrestricted access to a shared heritage of ideas and cultural expression. In digital culture, the concept of the public domain is a symbolic battleground where international intellectual property law is contested by post-national “free culture” movements that do not identify with social and economic inequalities arising from laws that restrict the circulation of

information and cultural expression in a networked society.

It is important to note that the public domain is a Euro-centric concept. It has systematically enabled the global (mis)appropriation of concepts, symbols and ceremonial rites that non-European cultures consider to be the bases of their traditional knowledge. This systemic inequity is made particularly visible through the advocacy of Indigenous groups, who recognize that a legislative framework based on the property relations of liberal economic theory conflicts with the customary laws of each tribal nation from which the creation, use and transmission of such cultural practices and traditions arise.

*Fair dealing* is those exceptions, written into Canadian copyright law, that allow copyrighted material to circulate as if it were in the public domain. Fair dealing makes no distinction between authorized and unauthorized use of content. Activist scholars and cultural critics often frame fair dealing exceptions as “citizen’s rights,” which enable access to copyright-protected works without seeking permissions. Artists have been able to practice fair dealing through the appropriative modes of parody and satire since 2012—prior to these policy reforms, appropriation through mechanical or

digital recording technologies was legally ambiguous. Users tend to find these provisions too restricting, whereas copyright owners (ranging from individual artists to large media conglomerates) tend to find they infringe upon their economic rights. Finding a balance between owners’ and users’ rights is important in the Canadian and Québécois contexts because, as Coombe, Wershler and Zeilinger observe, “the borders between artists, academics, audiences, and arts administrators are particularly permeable and individuals act in all these capacities simultaneously.” Most importantly, the courts tend to rely upon the customary practices of a particular field to determine when an instance of dealing is “fair.” Laura J. Murray characterizes fair dealing as a practice in the daily life of artists and writers, which means that the moral economies developed in artist-run publishing are “legally weighty”; as she further insists, the law does not tell artists what to do: “we make it, the law waits for us.”

#### **PRACTICE-BASED CHALLENGES TO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IN THE DIGITAL ERA**

The link between the right to free speech and the “fair use” of intellectual property is a central concern of digital culture movements, like open access, open source

and Creative Commons. These are global movements that develop through localized responses to policy decisions. An ethos of sharing serves as a counter-position to unbalanced intellectual property legislation, which stifles debate and discussion in the public sphere. It is not possible to “speak” if one must first buy the rights to the content or structure of language. Also significant is the role that software plays in enabling or disabling freedom of speech in these movements; as Coombe, Wershler and Zeilinger have observed, “the software we use to manage digital publishing will determine how open/closed the future of publishing will be.”

*Creative Commons* is a global movement that emerged in response to alarmist anti-piracy campaigns and the draconian enforcement of copyright legislation in the United States. In Canada, there are few comparable legal precedents, and the courts have, in general, taken a user-centered approach. At their most extreme, the license options made available through the Creative Commons system enable authors to renounce their economic rights and release their work immediately into the public domain; however, many of the more moderate license options do not differ significantly from the usages already permitted under

fair-dealing exceptions in Canada. Also important to note is that the emphasis on public-domain sharing in Creative Commons licensing continues to enable (mis)appropriation from non-European knowledge systems.

*Open access* is a global movement that developed in response to prohibitive pricing monopolies in academic publishing. This movement recognizes that in some contexts (such as academia) the remuneration of the author or publisher through royalties is secondary to the citation economies within which the work circulates. What is important is that their authorship is attributed and that the text is freely available and openly distributed, increasing the likelihood that it will find a public. e-artexte is an example of an open-access digital repository model that has been developed for visual-arts publishing outside of academic institutions. The repository recognizes that visual-arts publishers both desire, and struggle, to attain widespread circulation of publications. The software used to build the repository is search-engine-optimized, ensuring that digital files that are uploaded have a higher ranking in search results than if they were distributed on social media, blogs, artists’ or publishers’ websites, or other cloud-storage projects, such as AAAARG.org or Publication Studio’s

“free reading commons.” Furthermore, the code and file formats are non-proprietary, ensuring long-term preservation and accessibility as technologies evolve and become obsolete. ∞

#### FURTHER READINGS

Val Napoleon, *Thinking About Indigenous Legal Orders*, National Centre for First Nations Governance, June 2007.

► [http://fngovernance.org/ncfng\\_research/val\\_napoleon.pdf](http://fngovernance.org/ncfng_research/val_napoleon.pdf)

Laura J. Murray, “Deal With It,” in *Dynamic Fair Dealing: Creating Canadian Culture Online*, ed. Rosemary J. Coombe, Darren Wershler and Martin Zeillinger (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

Mél Hogan, “Opening e-Artexzte with Corina MacDonald.”

► <http://nomorepotlucks.org/site/opening-e-artexzte-with-corina-macdonald/>

e-Artexzte

► <http://e-artexzte.ca/>

AAAARG.org

► <http://thepublicschool.org/node/27202>

Publication Studio, “Free Reading Commons.”

► <http://www.publicationstudio.biz/>

Creative Commons

► <http://creativecommons.org/>

Alessandro Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing since 1894*. Onomatopée 77, 2012.

► [postdigitalprint.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Post-DigitalPrint\\_ALudovico\\_Singles.pdf](http://postdigitalprint.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Post-DigitalPrint_ALudovico_Singles.pdf)

Chantier sur l’adaptation des droits d’auteur à l’ère numérique. Synthèse de la validation Jonathan Roberge, Georges Azzaria, Guy Bellavance et Christian Poirier (avec la collaboration de Martin Bonneau, Guillaume Sirois et Martin Tétu).

► <http://www.chairefernanddumont.ucs.inrs.ca/publication/chantier-sur-lad-aptation-des-droits-dauteur-a-le-re-numerique-synthese-de-la-validation-2/?an=&ty=&th=&au=>

# Resources and Resourcefulness



by Felicity Tayler

THIS ESSAY introduces “How to Make a Boring Book,” the last section of the guide with its reference documents that approach print-based publishing and distribution as a practical undertaking, rather than a theoretical engagement or conceptual project. While these “how-to” checklists are useful entry points, they are also reminders that these are complex fields of activity whose shape and purpose are both enabled and constrained by the language used to describe them.

#### HOW TO MAKE A “BORING” BOOK

A key resource, which we have affectionately titled “How to Make a ‘Boring’ Book,” is a sample production schedule that was developed in 2005 for an artist-run centre with a mid-size annual operating budget of approximately \$175,000. It follows a process typical of museums and public galleries as they publish printed catalogues or thematic anthologies to accompany their exhibition programming.

Beginning with a series of questions one ought to ask from the onset of a publishing project, this production schedule may serve as a useful guideline for producing standardized genres in visual-arts publishing. However, it also leaves ample room for creative interpretation and

subversion of these genres through artistic strategies. The conceptualist affiliations of artist-run publishers lead them to call into question the aesthetic forms that visual-arts publishing can take—as well as these forms’ discursive power to name and confer value upon artists and artistic practices. In the expanded media spaces of digital technologies, the aesthetic effects of splitting or migrating content between print and online platforms can also be explored much in the same way as we, in producing this guide, have explored expanding its format from campaign format to print to interactive PDF. A lack of resources (human, technological, financial, etc.) will also force a potential publisher to deviate from this “ideal” process, as it is illustrated in this guide.

**PUBLICIZING PUBLICATIONS, OR:  
HOW TO GIVE YOUR BOOKS A  
SOCIAL LIFE**

Complementing the production schedule guidelines is a list of industry-specific references and a glossary of key words used in this guide. Among the resources is a template for making a pitch for your book, a standard publicity tool used in book distribution. This template should be used as an entry point for understanding a system wherein the book is a commodity that is produced and distributed

according to the metaphor of a supply chain, which can constrain a publication’s potentially rhizomatic circulation within a linear set of accumulative stages, with clear start and end points (from conception to sales). As discussed in Brief 2—“From Dissemination to Circulation”, this linear concept of book production and distribution does not reflect the way many artist-run publishers conceive of their purpose or process. ARCA, in consultation with Corinn Gerber, has produced a glossary. In addition to defining key terms, the glossary provides some background on the traditions and ideals that have shaped and still influence how artist-led publishers understand and redefine “access” in a cultural climate that promotes public engagement and less reliance on public funding through the adoption of business models. Other metaphors, such as a “document life cycle” or a “communications circuit,” drawn from the domain of libraries and archives, might better describe the long-term, multifaceted process of creation, distribution, collection, reprinting and reuse to which many artist-run publishers aspire. For the last fifty years, the metaphor of a “connective tissue,” “eternal network,” or “réseau autogéré” has inspired thinking around publishing within artist-run culture in Canada and Québec, likely due to the strong influence of

conceptual book-works, artists' magazines and Fluxus distribution models.

A recent glossary titled *A Book About—There's More to Life Than Books* describes the activities involved in book publishing as an act of “creating publics” or activating the “social life of a book.” Edited by Corinn Gerber, then director of Art Metropole, and Benjamin Thorel, member of the Paris-based gallery and bookshop castillo/corrales, *A Book About* comprises the voices of participants in a public seminar that took place at Art Metropole in 2013. That the book has a social life is a concept arguably indebted to anthropologist Arjun Appadurai. His theory that cultural objects (such as books or art works) move through different commodity phases, and across globalized cultural networks, allows present-day artist-run publishers to understand that economies of gift exchange (access to free digital copies and free public events) can work alongside and in relation to sales and public funding sources to attract publics and counter-publics. Print-on-demand copies of *A Book About* may be purchased from Publication Studio, and a digital file is also available for consultation and annotation through their “free reading commons.” ∞

#### FURTHER READINGS

Corinn Gerber and Benjamin Thorel, eds., *A Book About—There's More to Life Than Books* (Toronto: Art Metropole; Portland: Publication Studio; Paris: Paraguay Press, 2014). Free reading commons:   
 ▶ <http://a.nnotate.com/php/pdfnotate.php?d=2014-06-05&c=Tsd1t1TO&aac=LyDH-g54hFs6J&asig=guest>

Vincent Bonin and Michèle Thériault, eds., *Documentary protocols (1967–1975) / Protocoles documentaires (1967–1975)*, (Montreal: Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2010).

Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Guy Bellavance, *The Visual Arts in Canada: A Synthesis and Critical Analysis of Recent Research* (Montreal: Centre – Urbanisation Culture Société, Institut national de la recherche scientifique, 2011).

▶ <http://visualartsvisuels.ca/en/resources/#-bellavance>

# The Post-Digital Now

by Anne Bertrand  
and Felicity Tayler

THE *Grey Guide* WAS disseminated as a series of bi-weekly electronic newsletters from March 1 to June 21, 2017. These newsletters, or essays, were then printed as a series of essays bound as a paperback book in a limited run distributed for free to the ARCA membership and to be sold to wider publics at future gatherings, such as at several programmed launch events. A digital version of the publication has been made freely available on the ARCA website, while a PDF is archived in the e-artexte repository (following a year-long embargo). With concerted effort and a little luck, these digital copies will be linked to by our readers across multiple platforms, will be commented upon (positively or negatively) and will be shared internationally through social media. The guide, and its immediate and long-term circulation, was made possible through ARCA's multi-year operating grant from the Canada Council for the Arts, and the financial support of Department of Canadian Heritage (for translation) and l'Association des groupes en arts visuels francophones, as part of their L'art visuel s'écrit project.

We (Anne and Felicity) hope that the *Grey Guide* will provoke debate around structural issues in artist-run publishing that are often difficult to articulate due to their complexity. Although dense at times, the tone of

this guide assumes that its readers are already committed actors within digital-culture debates, as the issues inform their daily activities. ARCA and RCAAQ, our institutional sponsors, hope the *Grey Guide* will set the stage for future advocacy, leading, for instance, to a dedicated fee schedule for visual and media arts writing. The difficulty in accessing grants for translation of creative non-fiction through Department of Canadian Heritage is also of concern, particularly as the paradigm of official bilingualism appears to be giving way to an approach that uses multiple registers of languages, including Indigenous languages, diasporic dialects, Braille and Sign Languages, to speak to diversified publics on their own terms. Furthermore, ARCA and RCAAQ hope that the *Grey Guide* will fan the flames of artists' already-existing desires to establish international distribution and co-publishing relationships. Global conferences on art-book publishing are highly anticipated, as are future book fairs, with the view to continuing the work that already takes place in artist-run culture: collapsing disciplinary boundaries, destabilizing institutional structures, shifting social strata and transcending international borders—in short, promoting the ideals of open access, transparency and participatory modes of engagement that define democracy in a digital era.

Some important topics that we wish we had been able to address in more detail in this guide include: the role that crowdfunding has played in the success of *specific kinds* of print and digital publishing projects; the expanded forms that publishing and publicity can take in cross-platform digital media, as well as in print; which attributes of artist-run publishers are more likely to attract international co-publishing opportunities than others; and the role of private galleries and collectors in fundraising or fostering co-publishing relationships.

Alongside the advocacy presently taking place at the level of cultural and economic policy, artists and artist-run publishers continue to grapple with day-to-day decisions regarding how the free circulation of some aspect of their work will enable a commercial transaction elsewhere. In the post-Internet moment, the presentation of objects in gallery settings is deliberately conceived in terms of how the images of objects and installations circulate across digital platforms. A similar post-digital logic applies to artist-run publishing, as print-based forms are released in parallel digital formats. Information services such as e-flux and Akimbo shift the responsibility for copyright clearance of images to their clients, as they generate revenue from their ability to circulate publicity

throughout their proprietary networks. On the other hand, online archives like UbuWeb stand as examples of artist-run platforms where access to cultural objects is prioritized over remuneration for the artists. The provocative question in this moment continues to be: how do we understand the economies of the art world, when notions of economic sustainability have been removed from the equation? ∞





# Guide

# How to Make a Boring Book

THE FOLLOWING guidelines, proposed as an open conceptual framework, were originally produced by Skol (an artist-run centre located in Montréal) in consultation with curator Lesley Johnstone. Johnstone has extensive experience in visual-arts publishing in Québec, Canada and abroad, and in museum, public gallery and artist-run centre environments. These guidelines are intended to assist ARCs that wish to continue to produce printed or digital publications as part of their dissemination activities and services to artists and curators.

#### **WHERE TO START**

- Assess organizational capacity (personnel and resources already involved in regular operations).
- Assess requirements for expertise (additional resources needed for editing, planning, design, copy-editing, translation and production).
- Assess coherence with mission (which values of the organization are embodied in the production).
- Understand that, with few exceptions, publications produced in artist-run networks no longer benefit from commercial distribution.
- Be aware that most publication projects typically underestimate how much work is required to get books into the hands of readers.
- Plan resources for long-term promotion and dissemination.

Seek out partners or a co-publisher



Consider the support and format: print or digital (PDF, epub, blog, etc.), or both. Some examples of digital print-on-demand publishers:

› <https://pressbooks.com/>

› <http://www.marquisbook.com/en/>



Define the type of publication: exhibition catalogue, artist book, directory, thematic anthology, etc.

See faceted taxonomy: › <http://www.arca.art/greyguide/taxonomy/>.



Define concept and role of specific project: educational, documentary, conceptual. Identify needs.



Establish textual and visual content.



Identify collaborators and a production coordinator who will track the production until completion.



Choose graphic designer, determine number of pages, decide on a format.



Prepare budget (with the graphic designer).



Look for funding programs and prepare applications.



Based on funding responses, adjust budget.



Determine timeline.



Commission texts and reproductions.

**Note:** At this point, authors and publishers ought to think about open-access versions of their publications. To be authorized to deposit in e-artexte, publishers need to have the right to do so. By planning in advance, they can establish conditions that respect all parties; for example, a publication could be made available following a 12- or 24-month embargo period. Publications can be made available digitally under a Creative Commons licence.

The following specific clauses could be added to contracts:

*We (name of publisher) have your (name of author/creator) permission to provide open access to your materials in the e-artexte digital repository.*

*I (name of author/creator) retain the right to deposit a version of my work in the e-artexte digital repository.*

**Upon reception of textual content:**

- Editor reads and edits texts for content and consistency;
- Revision by authors, as needed;
- Copy edit for grammar, spelling, syntax, punctuation and style;
- Back to author for approval;
- Translation, if needed;
- Back to author to approve translation;
- Comparison of translation with original;
- Copy edit of translation.

**Upon receipt of images:**

- Determine links with the texts;
- Obtain permission to use images through reproduction licences;
- Prepare captions;
- See CARFAC reproduction fee schedule: ▶ <http://www.carfac.ca/carfac-raav/fee-calculator.php>

**Preparing materials for the designer:**

- Prepare charts, contributor bios, lists of exhibitions, etc.;
- Prepare text and photo files for graphic designer;
- Obtain:
  - o ISBN (for books);
  - o ISSN (for serials);
  - o CIP from the National Library and Archives of Quebec and Canada (editor's note: Cataloguing in Publication service has been discontinued for self-published materials);
  - o Barcode.



Send all materials to designer.

**During and after book design:**

- Approval of layout based on some sample pages, cover, etc.;
- Revision of first proof by publication coordinator and authors;
- Proofread laid-out page proofs for errors in text and book format issues;
- Verification and correction of up to three proofs.
- Send material to printer, with follow up by designer.



Upon receipt of book, make legal deposit to Library and Archives Canada and the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BANQ).



Deposit a print copy at Artex-te, and a digital file on e-artex-te: ▶ <http://e-artex-te.ca/membres.html>



Register with Biblioshare.



Register with Copibec or Access Copyright to receive reproduction royalties:  
▶ <http://www.copibec.qc.ca/en-us/home/registeringworks/5reasons.aspx>  
▶ <https://www.accesscopyright.ca/publishers/becoming-an-access-copyright-affiliate/>



Promotion, launch(es) and circulation.  
(See sales pitch and circulation and sales points, below.)

# Budget Items



### **PRE-PRODUCTION**

- Research expenses;
- Reprint licences and image reproduction royalties;
- Fees and honoraria:
  - Writers;
  - Artists and illustrators;
  - Editor(s) and production coordinator;
  - Copy editor, proofreader and translator;
  - Graphic designer (web and print);
  - Web developer.

### **PRODUCTION**

- Layout;
- Printing.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

- Office expenses;
- Contracts and copyright licences.

### **PROMOTION AND CIRCULATION**

- Communications;
- Launches;
- Shipping.

# Media Releases

“Take buyers for lunch!” —Kathy Slade

Media releases should be produced at least three months before the book's release, allowing time to work on a campaign to communicate information about the book's launches to a media list of targeted publics and specialized venues. The media release should include:

- A paragraph introducing the book;
- A paragraph introducing its authors and artists;
- Links to online information about the exhibition or other events, as relevant;
- Catch-phrase (slogan or positive criticism of the book, if available);
- Informative data: type of work, target readership, name of publisher, scheduled release date, cover image, number of pages, dimensions, ISBN, proposed retail price.

The publisher is responsible for producing and transmitting this pitch to different media outlets and broadcast networks.

# Referencing

It is important to register your book for referencing. Registering the publication in the following databases may seem time-consuming, but it is the only way to ensure visibility across multiple online platforms. It will be more likely that your publication will be indexed by Google or other search engines if it is linked to more than one place on the Web. Booksellers use research tools that allow them to see the availability of titles on the market—either for his or her own research, or at the request of a customer in the bookstore. When a title is taken on by a distributor, booksellers must deal with that distributor, or else possibly contact the publisher directly. To ensure that your books are listed, you as an editor must take these steps (i.e., if you are not working with a distributor). If you want your digital or print publication to be sold through services like the Google Books Partners Program or Amazon, you must create a profile and may have to pay for their referrals.

### **ISBN**

International Standard Book Number. This is an international thirteen-digit numerical standard assigned to books.

### **ISSN**

International Standard Serial Number. This is an international eight-digit numerical standard assigned to periodicals and serials.

### **CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION (CIP)**

For publications with an expected distribution of 100 or more copies within the first six months (print or epub), Cataloguing in Publication is a voluntary program coordinated by Library and Archives Canada between

cooperating publishers and libraries. CIP enables the cataloguing of books before they are published, and allows for the prompt distribution of cataloguing information to booksellers and libraries. Editor's note: Cataloguing in Publication service has been discontinued for self-published materials.

#### **ARTEXTE**

A contemporary art library with a collection created by and for the Canadian artistic community. Depositing a print copy at Artexte ensures that your publication is visible to researchers and to the public. All print publications are included in e-artexte.

#### **E-ARTEXTE**

An online platform that provides access to the Artexte catalogue and associated digital files. e-artexte catalogues Artexte's collection of publications on contemporary art from 1965 to the present. It offers an open-access digital repository for full-text documents on contemporary Canadian art. Some items in e-artexte are available only in print, some in digital format, some in both. e-artexte ensures both preservation standards and search-engine optimization (search-engine optimization, or SEO, makes publications easy to locate on the Web, substantially increasing their "discoverability").

#### **BOOKNET CANADA'S BIBLIOSHARE DATABASE**

A quality-controlled aggregation system that disseminates bibliographic data for all Canadian published books with unprecedented reach across the industry. It helps publishers and distributors create quality ONIX files (an XML Data format that book publishers use to submit bibliographic data to statistics-gathering

organizations like BookNet Canada) and facilitates sharing these files, as well as cover images and position files, by serving as the central source for metadata for all books available in the market. Once a book is listed in Biblioshare, you can produce a catalogue using a tool called Catalist.

The above online catalogues are standard book-publishing industry tools. All publishers produce them and use them to market their books. Catalist is a new service and a great opportunity for the Canadian art world to bring its books into the mainstream. Once your book is listed in Biblioshare, for example, it automatically enters the online consumer portal Canadian Bookshelf (► <http://canadianbookshelf.com/>), a more consumer-friendly interface/service than Catalist (which is designed for bookstores, libraries, etc.). On Canadian Bookshelf, you can add keywords to listings, write reviews, rate books, etc. Perhaps its best feature is that you can create reading lists. ► <https://booknetcanada.atlassian.net/wiki/display/UserDocs/BiblioShare+Webform>

# Circulation and Sales Points



### **CONSIGNMENT IN SPECIALIZED BOOKSTORES**

Books sold on consignment are not invoiced to the customer but paid for as they are resold. The Eyelevel Bookstore (Halifax), Art Metropole (► <https://art-metropole.com/>), Point de suspension (Saguenay), the Or Bookstore, READ Books at the Charles H. Scott Gallery (Vancouver), among others, carry books on consignment, offering visibility both in the shop and online. Booksellers typically pocket 40% of the sale price. For a listing of specialized book stores across the world ► [http://www.jrp-ringier.com/pages/index.php?id\\_r=12&id\\_pays=229](http://www.jrp-ringier.com/pages/index.php?id_r=12&id_pays=229)

### **BOOKSTORES IN MONTRÉAL**

With the closure of Formats, Montréal lost its only dedicated art bookstore. However, the city has a rich inventory of street-level bookstores, many of which carry art books. They also regularly hold launch events. These include Le Port de Tête (which maintains a rich selection of magazines from Québec's countercultural movements) and Drawn & Quarterly, in the Mile End; L'Écume des jours, in Villeray and L'Euguélonne, Librairie Féministe, in the Village.

### **BOOK FAIRS**

Here one may sell directly to end consumers and bookshops. Many publishers attend book fairs hoping to sell in bulk to shops or distributors in attendance; this transactional aspect of book fairs remains informal. Some current art-book fairs include: the Tokyo Art Book Fair, founded by a former Printed Matter employee; the LA Art Book Fair, an offshoot of the New York Art Book Fair (NYABF); the London Art Book Fair, at the Whitechapel Gallery; Miss Read, at

Kunstwerke in Berlin; the new Amsterdam Art/Book Fair; OffPrint Paris; PA/PER VIEW Art Book Fair, held in London, Brussels and Turin; the Vancouver Art/Book Fair; the Toronto Art Book Fair, as well as Edition Toronto: Toronto's International Art Book Fair; and the I Never Read Art Book Fair, held in Basel in conjunction with Art Basel.

### **BOOK LAUNCHES**

The most convivial platform for convening a dedicated public and selling books. Consider programming launch events with some sort of complementary activity. Organize a “launch tour” with multiple launches in different cities. Consider hosting launches in unusual “public” spaces. Use social media to gain visibility for the publication and its related launch events—this is particularly effective if your community “likes” your posts and shares the event in order to activate network effects.

### **COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED PUBLISHING (CSP)**

One example is the Publication Studio network. No matter what the choice of distribution platform, however, it must work in concert with publicity efforts in order to put the publication on the radar of its publics.

### **CONSORTIA**

Halifax INK, for one example, was formed in 2007 to represent the visual-arts publishing industry in Nova Scotia at the New York Art Book Fair (NYABF). The consortium groups four university art galleries (one of them whose local university press is the only one in North America specializing in the fine arts, media arts, craft and design) and two artist-run centres. Their

publications represent the artists and works being produced and exhibited in Nova Scotia and available for export, either through direct sales, travelling exhibitions, or new international exhibition and publishing opportunities.

#### **CO-PUBLISHING**

An arrangement between a book publisher and a magazine publisher, using the magazine's established subscription-based distribution service. For example: *Faire comme si tout allait bien*, a co-production between the artist-run centre Skol (Montréal) and the biennial art journal *Livraison* (published by Rhinocéros, in Strasbourg).

#### **IN-PERSON EXCHANGE**

Hand-to-hand circulation by artists and authors at specialized conferences and community events.

#### **MAGAZINES**

Magazines continue to function as important carriers of information and up-to-date micro-movements in the art world today. They have greater access than books to specialized publics and sectors, such as conceptual fashion stores, hairstylists, waiting rooms or public transport. They cross disciplines and language barriers more easily, and in some cases generate a scene about themselves. One example of this is Montréal's *Editorial Magazine*. Another is *New Distribution House*, a Montréal distribution house with a focus on magazines, founded by Didier Lerebours.

#### **PRINT-ON-DEMAND**

A form of publishing in which a publication only gets

produced if and when there is a demand for it (i.e., an order of one or more copies). Print-on-demand offers the possibility of small print runs, and is technically limited by standardization production equipment and formats. Print-on-demand is offered by online self-publishing platforms such as Lulu.com, where the provider receives a percentage of each sale. Some local initiatives, such as Publication Studio, which shares an online catalogue among several North American and European cities, also offer print-on-demand services. Increasingly, independent bookstores feature on-demand print equipment on site.

#### **TEMPORARY SHOPS AND POP-UPS**

In a specialized field like art, it may be worth looking out for temporary distribution structures. These can sometimes be more effective in terms of outreach than permanent ones, due to the attention and excitement generated by their temporary nature. Such structures can include curated sections in cultural venues, such as that at 820Plaza on rue Marconi in Montreal, Print Ready (at Dynamo Arts Association), KIOSK (at various locations, sometimes Lucky's Comics) in Vancouver, or special displays or pop-ups in museums, galleries, or universities accompanying conferences, exhibitions, performances and symposia.

#### **UNIVERSITY ART LIBRARIES**

University librarians often use recommendation services and approval plans whereby all publications within a pre-determined subject area will be ordered automatically. The main such services are YBP Books, with EBSCO (▷ <https://gobi.ebsco.com/>), and OASIS, with ProQuest (▷ <http://www.proquest.com/products-services/OASIS.html>).

### WEBSITES

Artist-run and self-publishers can promote book works through personal and organizational websites and social-media accounts, and manage sales directly using services such as PayPal, with all proceeds returning directly to the publisher, minus a small commission. Antenne Books (► <https://www.antennebooks.com/>) is a new, independent online distribution platform for small-press art publishing, and two similar ventures, Edition Taube and Three Letter Word, are in the works. Other online sales platforms include eBay and online shops offered by certain print-on-demand services like *Blurb*. If sellers wish their publications to be visible on Amazon or AbeBooks, they must create a profile and pay for the referrals.

# Glossary

in collaboration with  
Corinn Gerber

#### ACCESS AND ARTIST-RUN PUBLICATION

There are two distinct historical traditions in artist-run publication, which may be defined in terms of how they approach “public” access. The French *livre d’artiste* of declining Modernism (from the 1920s onwards) was initiated by art dealers and patrons such as Henri Kahnweiler or Ambroise Vollard as commercial enterprises. These entrepreneurs contracted artists of the Paris avant-garde and exiled avant-garde artists living in Paris, respectively, to produce limited editions for bibliophiles designed to please a distinguished community of collectors. For a *livre d’artiste*, frequently a visual artist would be paired with a writer. Often consisting of loose pages to be framed later, these editions emphasized material and crafts. In contrast, one of the major aims of the North-American *artist’s book*, the emergence of which in the 1960s coincided with the availability of mass reproduction technologies such as offset printing and Xerox coping, was to provide the “general public” with access to artworks. The new technologies allowed artists control over their production: to produce publications in high volume (though rarely exceeding editions of 1,000) and to sell them at low prices. With these publications, their conceptual, immaterial aspects were emphasized over material and craft. A key goal of this self-directed mode of production was to circumvent

art-world institutions of dissemination such as galleries and museums, together with their limitations vis-à-vis accessibility, such as the uniqueness of works and select clientele. Instead, *artists' books* and other forms of artist-initiated publications would be available, ideally, in supermarkets, gas stations and in bookstore chains; they would be inserted into daily newspapers and mainstream magazines, and discussed on radio and television shows. However, contemporary numbered and signed artists' editions in the tradition of the *livre d'artiste* are often produced to contribute to the funding of other forms of artist-initiated publications, including artists' books (e.g., Printed Matter, Art Metropole) and magazines (e.g., Parkett, Texte zur Kunst, MAY Revue, DIS Magazine). Contemporary artists' publications in Québec is rooted in both traditions—the *livre d'artiste* and the tradition of the artist's book—different from Anglophone Canada, which has a stronger connection to the North-American tradition. → See also: **Parallel Distribution System.**

**Sources:**

Joan Lyons, ed., *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook* (New York: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985); Germano Celant, *Book as Artwork 1960/1972*, 2nd ed. (New York: 6 Decades Books, 2011).

**AFFECTIVE LABOUR**

“In ‘Grundrisse,’ Karl Marx states that with the development of capitalism, less and less capitalist production relies on living labour and more and more on the integration of science, knowledge and technology in the production process as the engines of accumulation [e.g., immaterial labour]. But what is *affective*



*labour*? And why is it included in the theory of immaterial labour? I imagine it is included because—presumably—it does not produce tangible products but ‘states of being,’ that is, it produces feelings.... It used to be called a ‘labour of love’; Negri and Hardt instead have discovered ‘affection.’” Source: Sylvia Federici, “Precarious Labor: A Feminist Viewpoint,” lecture, Bluestockings Bookstore, New York City, October 28, 2006.

#### AGGREGATOR

The verb “to aggregate” means to convolute disparate information sources into a coherent collection. The noun “aggregator” describes any organization or business which combines individual services or customers into specific forms and groups for reasons of convenience, economy, or profit. An *Internet* aggregator aggregates information or content relating to a single subject from multiple online sources and presents it in a coherent form on a single website, sometimes by categorizing this content (such as e.g. search engines or RSS feeds). Software that performs this function can also be described as an aggregator. Source: Mehdi Khosorow-Pour, *Dictionary of Information Science and Technology*, vol. 1 (IGI Global, 2007).

#### APPROPRIATION

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “appropriation” as follows: “The making of a thing private property, whether another’s or one’s own; taking as one’s own or to one’s own use; concr. the thing so appropriated or taken possession of.” Cultural appropriation, however, extends to how culture comes into being and how it circulates. With colonization, Western science and cultural production extracted and claimed ownership

of non-Western knowledge, imagery and production/manufacture. Western nations, and organizations and individuals within those nations, capitalized on these appropriated assets, while dispossessing those who had created and developed them, sometimes even denying them the right to pursue such creation/production themselves. How we approach today's digital technologies, therefore, requires a resituation that accounts for the continuance of these inequitable systems of knowledge up to today, and which includes multiple structures of accountability and overlapping access regimes for different kinds of knowledge in the process of cultural innovation.

**Literature:** Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999); Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom," *New Centennial Review* 3.3 (2003): 257–337; Kimberly Christen, "Gone Digital: Aboriginal Remix and the Cultural Commons," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12 (2005): 315–45.

#### **ARTISTS' EDITIONS**

Numbered and signed artists' publications—prints, drawings, other objects—limited to a certain number, often produced for sale.

#### **BOOK SPRINT**

A "book sprint" brings together a group of editors to produce a finished book in three to five days. This includes written content, illustration and design. The content of the finished book is often made available immediately at the end of the sprint in all major digital

formats and print-on-demand. Source: D. M. Berry and Michael Dieter, “Book Sprints: Everything You Wanted to Know.” (► <https://www.booksprints.net/2012/09/everything-you-wanted-to-know/>)

### **BOOKSELLER’S DISCOUNT**

The usual discount that retailers require is 40% off the list price. This is the minimum, and it can go higher. In many cases, books must be returnable. This is a quaint carryover from an earlier era in publishing, which in effect makes most bookstores into consignment shops. The bookstore pays the wholesaler \$6 for the book that it will sell to a customer in the store for \$10. Online and print-on-demand marketplaces such as Amazon offer the option for artists and publishers to open their own storefronts.

#### **Sources:**

- <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2010/06/self-publishing-basics-understanding-book-discounts/>
- <https://sellercentral.amazon.com/forums/thread.jspa?threadID=2058>
- <http://www.lulu.com/blog/tag/distribution/#st-hash.8B7ca4Y2.dpbs>

### **COLLABORATIVE WRITING**

Collaborative writing describes forms of writing and publishing where several authors produce a text simultaneously, which is sometimes even published in real time. Online collaborative writing tools include Google Drive, Mediawiki, Free Reading Commons, Markdown, O’Reilly Atlas, etc.

**Literature:**

Markus Dreßen, Lina Grumm, Anne König, and Jan Wenzel, *Liner Notes: Conversations About Making Books* (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2010); Mercedes Bunz “The Returned: On the Future of Monographic Books” (► <http://insights.uksg.org/articles/10.1629/2048-7754.122/>); Rodney H. Jones and Christoph A. Hafner, “Collaboration in Writing,” in *Understanding Digital Literacies: A Practical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

**CONSIGNMENT SALE / CONSOLIDATION**

A trading arrangement in which a seller sends goods to a buyer or reseller who pays the seller in consolidated payments only as and when the goods are sold. The seller remains the owner (title holder) of the goods until they are paid for in full, and, after a certain period, takes back the unsold goods. Also called “sale on return,” or “goods on consignment.” Read more ► <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/consignment-sale.html>

**CO-PUBLISHING**

Joint financial investment by two or more publishers to conceive, produce and print, under their respective imprints, individual titles or collections to be sold in their respective markets. Source ► [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2015/pc-ch/CH41-30-2015-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/pc-ch/CH41-30-2015-eng.pdf)

**COPY EDITING**

Copy editors look for grammatical and spelling errors, and other inconsistencies, and they may make notes for designers regarding production requirements. Check out the Editors Association of Canada’s definitions for more information. Source ► <http://www.>

[editors.ca/hire/definitions.html](http://editors.ca/hire/definitions.html)

### **CREATIVE COMMONS**

Creative Commons is an American non-profit organization that enables sharing and reuse of creativity and knowledge through the provision of free legal tools, mostly in the form of licences for Internet use.

Source ▶ <https://creativecommons.org>

### **CROWDFUNDING**

In the field of artist-run publication, crowdfunding has emerged as an alternative to traditional public and private funding sources. For instance, independent small-press publishers use it to collect pre-orders for planned publications, thereby assembling a production budget through advance sales. In such cases, the full amount of payment goes directly toward producing the publication. Authors, artists and publishers also frequently use corporate crowdfunding websites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo, which take a percentage of the returns. There are significant differences between the various providers. For instance, Kickstarter keeps a lower percentage, but does not allow users to keep the money they raise if they fail to meet their declared fundraising goal. There are also online crowdfunding services that specialize in the field of publication, such as such as Pubslush/PubLaunch.

### **DISTRIBUTOR'S DISCOUNT**

In traditional arts book trade, distributors act as intermediaries between publishers and bookshops. This reduces shipping costs (including for the reader) for transcontinental distribution by ways of consolidated shipping. The minimum discount a distributor receives

for books is 60% of the retail price. Of this percentage, the distributor passes on 40% to retailers, and invests the remaining 20+% to cover costs of cataloguing, advertising, distribution of press copies, invoicing, administration, etc. Transportation costs from the publisher to the distributor are often courtesy of the publisher. Today, many distributors sell to Amazon as well as directly to individual customers. These conditions differ slightly in the case of magazine distributors. Distribution is based on the practice of consignment, usually with agreed payment intervals of several months and—in practice—with frequent delays in payment. For bigger productions, a confirmed number of copies ordered by a distributor can assist in the financing of the publication's production. Such a deal is best settled in a written agreement to avoid outstanding production gaps, which can occur due to payment delays.

Book Society ▶ <http://www.thebooksociety.org/>

r.a.m. ▶ <http://www.rampub.com/>

D.A.P. ▶ <http://www.artbook.com/>

Anagram ▶ <http://www.anagrambooks.com/>

Antenne ▶ <https://www.antennebooks.com/>

New Distribution House ▶ <https://shop.newdistributionhouse.com/pages/informations>

### EAN BARCODE

EAN used to stand for “European Article Number,” but has retained the acronym even though it is now known as “International Article Number,” also known as the Universal Product Code, or UPC. This is the barcode system by which retailers scan products at the point of sale. Information about the product is encapsulated in the barcode as product identification numbers.

Publishers in Canada apply for membership with GSI Canada and are assigned a unique company identification number, which is the first part of the EAN. The remaining digits of the EAN/UPC are the book's International Standard Book Number (ISBN). **Read more** ▶ <http://www.adams1.com/upccode.html>

#### **ETERNAL NETWORK / RÉSEAU AUTOGÉRÉ**

The idea of the “Eternal Network” goes back to the concept of a global, decentralized connective tissue of artistic production as developed by French Fluxus artist Robert Filliou—a frequent visitor to Canada—in collaboration with American artist and composer George Brecht. In its applied meaning, it describes a system for the production and exchange of often state-supported artwork in Canada, together with international recognition and publicity, which initially occurred through a network of organizations and publications, and via the mail. The idea of the Eternal Network subsequently led to the “parallel gallery system” of artist-run centres in Canada. → See also: **Parallel Distribution System**.

#### **Literature:**

Luis Jacob, *Golden Streams, Artists' Collaboration and Exchange in the 1970s* (Toronto: Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto at Mississauga, 2002); Vincent Bonin and Michèle Thériault, eds. *Protocoles documentaires (1967-1975)* (Montréal: Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2010).

#### **FIFTY-FIFTY SPLIT**

A term adapted from the music field to describe a contract between an author and a publisher upon a publication, which foresees that any remaining returns after

the payment of all production costs are split in equal measure between publisher and author. **Literature:** Daylle Deanna Schwartz: *Start and Run Your Own Record Label* (London and New York: Billboard Books, 2003).

#### **FLAT FEE**

Of a standard amount; not varying with changed conditions; without excess or diminution for particular cases.

**Source:** Oxford English Dictionary.

#### **FREE SPEECH, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

Similar to many Western liberal democratic nation-states, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a part of the Constitution Act, in its paragraph on “Fundamental Freedoms,” guarantees “freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.” However, free speech can be abused or restricted (including by the state), and is subject to interpretation (including by the law). ▶ <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html>

#### **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Property (such as patents, trademarks, copyright material, or registered and unregistered design rights) that is the product of invention or creativity, and does not exist in a tangible, physical form.

**Source:**

Jonathan Law, *A Dictionary of Law* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Canadian Intellectual Property Office ▶ [http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/wr03585.html?Open&wt\\_src=cipo-ip-main](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/wr03585.html?Open&wt_src=cipo-ip-main)



### LEGAL DEPOSIT

Federal and sometimes also provincial legislation requires publishers to deposit, free of charge, copies (usually two) of all published works within seven days of their publication. Source › [http://adelf.qc.ca/content/uploads/2014/06/LEXIQUE\\_final1.pdf](http://adelf.qc.ca/content/uploads/2014/06/LEXIQUE_final1.pdf)

### LICENCE

A license grants permission to do what would otherwise be unlawful. In the context of publication, a license grants a person or organization to publish content (a text, image, or an entire publication) for a defined language, territory, or use. Usually accompanied by the payment of a flat fee to the author upon passing of the license, while further percentage shares in sales are subject to negotiation. Source: Jonathan Law, *A Dictionary of Law* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

### LIQUID BOOKS

Digital “books” published under the (gratis/libre) conditions of both “open editing” and “free content.” Readers are free to compose, rewrite, edit, annotate, translate, tag, add to, remix, reformat, reinvent and reuse Liquid Books, or produce parallel versions of them. While *speed* is the central characteristic in the concept of a book sprint, *change* is the central characteristic of a liquid book. Here, the production process starts with an author (or a group of authors) who provides content open to change, until the content gets “frozen,” i.e., can’t be altered anymore. Source › <http://liquidbooks.pbworks.com>

### OPEN ACCESS

Open-access publications are digital, online, free of

charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions, thus accessible to “all,” e.g., the “general public.”

Source: Peter Suber, “Open Access Overview.” ▶ <http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>

### OPEN SOURCE

The sharing and collaborative improvement of software source code. The “open source” label was created at a strategy session held on February 3, 1998, in Palo Alto, California, shortly after Netscape’s announcement of the release of its source code. Source ▶ <https://opensource.org/>

### PARALLEL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

The ideal of the North-American artist’s book to reach the “general public” (→ Access and Artist-Run Publication) was only partially successful. As it turned out, not everyone was interested in artist-initiated publications, which therefore were not promoted by mainstream sales points whose acquisition policies depended on sales. Today, the art market’s internal laws of scarcity and limitation continue to govern access to these publications. For instance, Lawrence Weiner’s famous artist’s book *Statements*, available for USD \$1.95 at the time of its publication in 1968, is today traded as a rare collector’s item at more than five hundred times its original price, often by those very institutions that the artist’s book was intended to circumvent. As many aspire to expand the artist’s book’s distribution mechanisms, a “parallel distribution system” emerged, in its beginnings initiated and maintained by artists, such as New York’s famous Printed Matter Inc. In Canada, the emergence of artist-run culture is intrinsically related to this system. Historically, for instance,

Artex te was founded as a distributor and bookstore for artists' publications. Alongside Art Metropole in Toronto, Image Bank in Vancouver and Véhicule Art in Montréal, to name only a few, Artex te and its fellow artist-run institutions sought to establish a functioning system to enhance the conditions for the dissemination of artists' works and their strategic placement on an international map. (→ Eternal Network) Some of these institutions are still active today, while others reoriented their activities toward collection, documentation and preservation (such as Artex te, or New York City's Franklin Furnace). Today's specialized international distribution network of arts publications is partially a result of this distribution system. It can be traced, for instance, by running through the exhibitor lists of the New York and L.A. art-book fairs.

**Literature:**

Lucy Lippard, "Conspicuous Consumption: New Artists' Books," in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyons (New York: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985), 49.

**PRINT RUN**

The number of copies printed in a single impression.  
Source ▶ [http://adelf.qc.ca/content/uploads/2014/06/LEXIQUE\\_final1.pdf](http://adelf.qc.ca/content/uploads/2014/06/LEXIQUE_final1.pdf)

**SELF-PUBLISHING**

A form of publication in which the author(s) of the publication is also its publisher(s). As such, they are in full control of the production and in many cases also circulation of the publication. This includes for instance the publication of zines which are passed on

hand-to-hand; artist-led imprints; self-publishers who exclusively distribute directly; or collective online publishing-endeavours.

**Sources:**

Annette Gilbert, ed. *Publishing as Artistic Practice* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016); Christoph Keller and Michael Lailach, *KIOSK—Modes of Multiplication* (Kunstabibliothek Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2009); Maria Fusco and Ian Hunt, *Put About: A Critical Anthology on Independent Publishing* (London: Bookworks, 2004).

**STANDARDIZATION  
(OF PRODUCTION METHODS)**

Every production method implies specific technical standards for production, which influence how content may be reproduced and circulated. For instance, offset print requires a minimum print run of approximately five hundred copies, while the cost per copy decreases with higher print runs. Newspaper printing requires even higher print runs and rasterized images. The ability of Xerox copying to reproduce fades, grades and colours is limited, but allows for low print runs. Digital print, print-on-demand and Risograph printers also allow for small print runs at low cost, but have access only to a limited set of colours. Inkjet printing allows for full production control, but is limited to the CYMK colour scheme and its respective toners, which remain expensive. Print-on-demand is based on standardized reproduction technology, which limits choice of binding methods and covers. 3D printing is becoming more affordable and accessible, even without knowledge of CAD drawing software. In most online publishing tools

(including blogs such as WordPress and Tumblr; social media; the PDF-based e-books such as iTunes, Kindle, iBooks, Nook and Kobo; Google Images and Books, Liquid Books, print-on-demand and e-publishing platforms such as Lulu.com, Leanpub, or (open-access) databanks such as Wikipedia, Library Genesis, Aaaaarg, fail, Monoskop, UbuWeb, format is limited according to the application being used, and can therefore often only reproduce particular text and image formats and colour schemes, and may allow access to certain networks but not others. Source: Helmut Kipphan, *Handbook of Print Media* (Berlin: Springer, 2001).

#### Offset—

Gatineau ▶ <http://www.gauvin.ca/en-ca>  
Montmagny/Québec/Montréal ▶ <http://empreinte.ca>  
Montréal ▶ <http://www.marquisbook.com>  
Toronto ▶ <http://www.flashreproductions.com/>

#### Digital Print—

Gatineau ▶ <http://www.gauvin.ca/en-ca/>  
Montréal ▶ <http://www.quadriscan.com/>  
Toronto ▶ <http://standardform.org/>

#### Risograph—

Montréal ▶ <http://charmantetcourtois.com>  
Toronto ▶ <http://colourcodeprinting.com>  
Vancouver ▶ <http://www.monikerpress.ca>

#### 3-D-Printing—

Montréal ▶ <https://library.concordia.ca/locations/technology-sandbox/>

**Print-on-Demand—**

Montmagny/Québec/Montréal ▶ <http://empreinte.ca>

Guelph ▶ <https://publication-studio.myshopify.com/collections/ps-guelph>

Vancouver ▶ <https://bookmachine.ca>

**Self-publishing online—**

▶ <http://www.blurb.ca>

▶ <https://www.lulu.com>

▶ <https://leanpub.com>

▶ <https://www.newspaperclub.com/>

**Databanks—**

▶ <http://libgen.io>

▶ <http://aaaaarg.fail>

▶ <https://monoskop.org>

▶ <http://www.ubuweb.com/>

**SYSTEMIC INEQUALITIES**

Systemic inequalities are inequalities that are reliably reproduced over time along the lines of social group differences, even in the absence of patterns of overt or intentional discrimination on the part of identifiable social agents. Such group-patterned inequalities extend across an array of social domains, including income, education, social status (including cultural affirmation or stigmatization), health, life expectancy and representation in political institutions and the law. Systemic inequalities tend to be intergenerational patterns of group-structured difference. Where systemic inequalities are in place, inequalities in one social domain generate inequalities in other social domains and interact dynamically to reproduce themselves over time and across generations.

**Source:**

Melissa S. Williams, "Access to Public Universities: Addressing Systemic Inequalities," conference paper, Taking Public Universities Seriously, University of Toronto, December 3–4, 2004.

