ART REFERENCE: A STUDY

by Mary Graham

Among the overwhelming amount of resources available in the arts, it is difficult to identify the most relevant and valuable information. It is the intent of this paper to highlight quality resources for both artists' books and miniature books from the viewpoint of professional librarians in Indiana. This paper reports on the perceived value of reference sources. Based on the findings of this study a better understanding of the value of the tools reference librarians use will be gained.

One way to evaluate the perceived value of reference sources is to ask experts (art librarians in this study). Experts' perceived value in this study is assessed within the context of the users' needs. Therefore, to begin this study, two users' needs scenarios were developed. These scenarios, which illustrate potential needs within the rare books field, represent the viewpoint of two students with differing objectives to (Appendix 1). The first scenario involves an undergraduate student interested in combining their writing hobby with their sculptural background, and would like to research artists' books as an appropriate medium. An artist's book is "a book designed, produced, or illustrated by an artist. Also an idiosyncratic one-of-a-kind book or a very limited edition" (Greenfield, 1998, p.5) The patron would like to find non-conventional book forms along with information about the manipulation of text within the book form itself. The second scenario is from the perspective of a graduate student looking to research a paper topic. The student is to find the history of miniature books and the influence of their small format. A miniature book is "a book under 3 inches in height" (Greenfield, 1998, p.45). It should be said that miniature books are not necessarily art books; however, it is common for them to be artful in content or format.

After defining users' needs in each scenario, a list of resources pertaining to each scenario was identified (Appendix 1). These resources were first located by subject searches in Indiana University libraries' online catalog, IUCAT, for "artists' books," "artists' books – specimens," "miniature books" and "miniature books –

specimens." Then the list of resources was expanded by searching Art Index Retrospective, WorldCat, Art Full Text, LISA, and EBSCO host. These searches produced two sizeable lists of relevant resources and resulted in a list of twenty-eight sources for the first scenario and twelve for the second.

Since data collection involved art librarians, it was necessary to gain approval from the Human Subjects Committee. Submission of all procedures and instruments used along with the proof of passing a test was necessary before any research could begin. Once approval was confirmed, a list of librarians to contact was developed through two online sources. Libcat: A Guide to Reference Sources on the Internet, a website containing library information that is searchable geographically, was used to identify academic libraries in Indiana. Each library's homepage was examined and a contact person was identified for each library. Another list of academic libraries in Indiana was identified and used, the Manchester College Library website. To be sure that all possible library contacts were identified, the American Libraries Directory was used (American Library Association, 2004). This search resulted in a total of twenty-eight relevant libraries and thirty-two librarians (Table 1).

During January and February 2006 recruitment emails were sent to all thirty-two librarians, from the assembled list of library contacts, inviting the librarians to participate in the research project. This initial email was met with an impressively speedy response from eight librarians who replied within an hour of the initial email. For the librarians that did not respond within a week, a second email was sent, followed by a third email if still no response was received after an additional week. Of the thirty-two librarians contacted, eight said they were unable to contribute, twelve gave no response to the emails, three said "maybe," and nine agreed to participate. For those librarians that responded, a study information sheet was sent along with the scenarios and the resource lists requiring their responses within the word document attachments (Appendix 1). Data was received from only five librarians, at a response rate of fifteen percent. For each

TABLE 1: LIBRARY CONTACTS

Library	Website
Ancilla College	www.ancilla.edu/library
Anderson University (Nicholson Library)	www.andersonart.org
Ball State University	www.library.bus.edu
Bethel College	www.bethel-in.edu
Butler	www.butler.edu/libr
De Pauw	www.depauw.edu/library
Earlham College	www.earlham.edu/~libr
Hanover College	www.hanover.edu/library
Indiana Wesleyan Uniersity	www.indews.edu/library
Manchester College	www.manchester.edu/oaa/library
Taylor University	www.tayloru.edu/upland
Huntington	www.huntington.edu/library
Indiana State University	www.odin.indstate.edu/home.html
Indiana University-Bloomington	www.libraries.iub.edu/index.php?pageId=80
(IU Bloomington-Lilly Library)	www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/index.html
IUP Columbus	www.columbus.iupui.edu/library/
IPFW Helmke Library	www.lib.ipfw.edu/
IU East	www.iue.edu/library/LibInfo.html
IU Kokomo	www.iuk.edu/~kolibry/
IU Northwest	www.iun.edu/~lib
IU South Bend	www.iusb.edu/~libg
IU South East	www.ius.edu/library/
IUPUI Herron School of Art Library	www-lib.iupui.edu/libinfo/hlt.html
IUPUI Unversity Library	www-lib.iupui.edu/libinfo/personnel.html
Saint Mary's College	www.saintmarys.edu/TeachingResearch/Library
University of Indianapolis	http://kml.uindy.edu/aboutus/personnel.php
University of Notre Dame	www.library.nd.edu/directory
University of Southern Indiana	www.usi.edu/library/personnel.html
Wabash	www.wabash.edu/library

scenario, all participants were asked to rank the top five most helpful resources from the list, and if they knew of additional resources that were not included on the list, to add and rank them.

All responses were recorded throughout the process for later interpretation. Librarian's responses are reported in Table 2, which includes the rankings for the resources they found valuable, and the average of each resource's rankings. The resources are ranked by rating averages first, then alphabetically. Both the averages and the individual values for each resource are included because incorporating only the averages would have hidden the instances when a book received both high and low values. For example, the Journal of Artists' Books was ranked one by "Librarian 1" and ranked five by "Librarian 2" yielding an average value of three. Similarly, an average of three was found for Joan Lyons' Artists' Books: Critical Anthology and Sourcebook, but it was ranked three by both "Librarian 2" and "Librarian 3." Additionally, the fifth librarian involved in the study gave a general response to the scenarios, which is included at the bottom of the table.

As seen in Table 2, thirteen books were assigned with a value for scenario one and eleven in scenario two. Librarians 1 through 4 were able to rank their top five most valuable resources for scenario one, however, as noted by "Librarian 3," limiting the number of important items to five was not realistic. Scenario two seemed to present a greater challenge to "Librarian 3" who said, "This is not my area of expertise. I would send the student to the [Anonymous] Library."

TABLE 2: RATINGS

SCENARIO 1: ARTISTS' BOOKS	Rankings				
Resources	Librarian 1	Librarian 2	Librarian 3	Librarian 4	Average
Drucker, Johanna. The Century of Artists' Books. NY: Granary Books, 1995.		1	2	1	**1.3**
Hubert, Renne Riese, and Judd, David Hubert. The Cutting Edge of Reading: Artists' Books. NY: Granary Books, 1999.		2			**2**
Johnson, Pauline. Creative Bookbinding. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963.	2				**2**
Smith, Keith. Structure of the Visual Book. NY: Keith Smith Books, 2003.				2	**2**
Webberly, Marilyn, and Forsyth, Joan. Books, Boxes, and Wraps. WA: Bifocal Publications, 1995.			1	3	**2**
Journal of Artists' Books. [JAB] New Haven: Nexus Press, 1994.	1	5			**3**
Lyons, Joan. Artists' Books: Critical Anthology and Sourcebook. NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985.		3	3		**3**
Golden, Alisa. Creating Handmade Books. NY: Sterling Publishing, 2000.			4		**4**
Laferla, Jane. The Penland Book of Handmade Books: Master Classes in Bookmaking Techniques. Lark, 2004.	3			5	**4**
McCarthy, Mary and Manna, Philip. Making Books by Hand: A Step-by-Step Guide. Quarry Books, 2000.	4				**4**
Otis College of Art and Design, Artists Book Collection http://content.library.otis.edu/collections/artistsbooks.htm				4	*** 4**
Klima, Stefan. Artists' Books: a Critical Survey of the Literature. NY: Granary Books, 1998.		4	5		**4.5**
Smith, Keith and Jordan, Fred. Bookbinding for Book Artists. NY: Keith Smith Books, 1998.	5				**5**

Comments:

Librarian 3: "There are many useful resources on this bibliography. Limiting me to only 1-5 is not realistic."

Librarian 4: *"I would rank this higher if you could browse by format or materials rather than just by artist."

SCENARIO 2: MINIATURE BOOKS

SCENARIO 2: MINIATURE BOOKS	Rankings				
Resources	Librarian 1	Librarian 2	Librarian 3	Librarian 4	**Average**
Bondy, Louis W. Minaiture Books: Their History from the Beginnings to the Present Day. London: Sheppard Press, 1981.	1	1	1	2	**1.25**
Bondy, Louis W. Small is Beautiful. Miniature Book Society, 1987.			2		**2**
Welsh, Doris V. The History of Miniature Books. Albany, NY: Fort Orange Press, 1987.		3		1	**2**
Bradbury, Robert C. Antique United States Miniature Books, 1690-1900. North Clarendon: Microbibliophile, 2001.		2		3	**2.5**
Hanson, Robert F. Discovering Miniature Books. NY: Opuscula Press, 1978.	2	4			**3**
Thomas, Peter. More Making Books by Hand: Exploring Miniature Books, Alternative Structures, and Found Objects. Gloucester, MA: Quarry Books, 2004.			3		**3**
Bradbury, Robert C. Twentieth Century United States Miniature Books. North Clarendon: Microbibliophile, 2000.				4	**4**
Sheringham, H.T. A Library in Miniature. London: The Java head Bookship, 1948.	4				**4**
Weber, Francis J. Minibibliophilia. CA: Dawson's Book Shop, 1979.	3	5			**4**
Koopman, Harry Lyman. Miniature Books. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1968.	5				**5**
The Microbibliophile. Mattituck, N.Y.: Robert F. Hanson, 1977-.				5	**5**

Comments:
Librarian 3: "This is not my area of expertise. I would send the student to the Lilly Library. I know Peter Thomas and have collected his works. Miniature Books are not necessarily artist books."

Overall Comments:
Librarian 5: "If I received those questions, I would search our library's catalog/indexes jointly with the student, would give him/her printouts of titles/ citations that might be relevant, and would send him/her to the stacks/ejournals to browse and select the books/articles that seemed most interesting.I would not recommend one book over another, and don't believe I would obtain enough information in the course of a standard reference interview to truly know which one would be most helpful to the student. I most certainly have NOT read all of these books on your lists (probably haven't read any of them!). It would only be if I had read them myself, and could ask a lot of specific questions of the student, that I would feel confident recommending specific titles.So, I really can't "choose 5 resources and rank them according to their usefulness;" and I wouldn't actually do that anyway. I believe my role is to put the student in contact with the resources, then let him/her make decisions about their value within that particular context. if asked about the quality or authority of a particular title, I might search for published reviews; but that is too time-consuming to do in most instances when a student is looking for books on a topic."

The rating values for each item varied. The first resource in scenario one of Table 1, Johanna Drucker's The Century of Artists' Books, was ranked by almost all librarians; "Librarians 2 and 4" gave it a one and "Librarian 3" gave it a two. The first item in scenario two of Table 1, Miniature Books: Their History from the Beginnings to the Present Day by Louis W. Bondy, was ranked high by the most librarians. It received a ranking of one from "Librarians 1, 2, and 3," and a two from "Librarian 4." It was more common though for items to have been rank

number of librarians indicate a higher value than items ranked by fewer or only one librarian. For example, Miniature Books: Their History from the Beginnings to the Present Day, was rated by all four librarians, for the second scenario, and The Century of Artists' Books, was ranked among the five sources by three out of the four librarians. These two top sources were not only ranked high but also ranked by high number of librarians. Thus, almost all of the participant art librarians at Indiana agree on the perceived value of at least one item for each scenario.
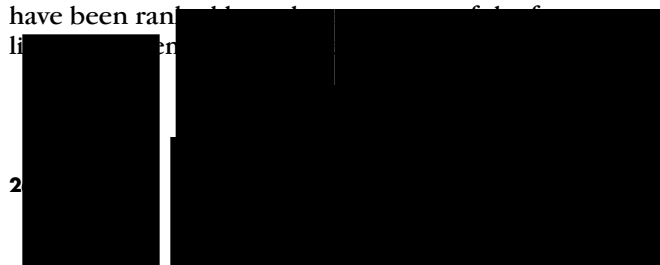
This sample group is not large enough to be representative of all art librarians. Also, the use of only two scenarios limits the evaluation to a small number of sources. The values assigned to each item offer an introductory insight of the value of the resources. Further research could be done for closer examination by expanding the number of resources to be ranked and the number of librarians surveyed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank each person who made this study possible because without his or her help it would have been unfeasible. There was a great degree of patience with each participant who had to endure numerous emails with reminders of deadlines, and everyone was very helpful even if they could not participate in this specific research endeavor. Many librarians were unable to help due to their lack of familiarity with the resources or the topic itself for not every library collected the subject matter I was researching. In this instance, he or she tried to either provide me with contact information of another librarian they thought could help, or forwarded the information on for me. Their help made this study a positive and insightful experience.

APPENDIX 1

SCENARIO 1: *ARTIST BOOKS*

An undergraduate college student is interested in combining their hobby of writing with their sculptural background and would like to research artist books as an appropriate medium. In order to do this, the student would like to research the possible non-conventional book forms along with the manipulation of text among the book form itself.

Resources

[Please choose 5 resources, and rank them according to their usefulness in the spaces provided: 1 = most useful,

5 = least useful]

Journal of Artists' Books. [JAB] New Haven: Nexus Press, 1994.

The Bonefolder. Dewitt, NY.

Blake, Kathy. Handmade Books: a Step-by-Step Guide to Crafting Your Own Books. MA: Bulfinch Press, 1997.

Brenni, Vito Joseph. Bookbinding, a Guide to the Literature. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982.

Cockerell, Douglas, and London, Pitman. Bookbinding, and the Care of Books: a Text-book for Bookbinders and Librarians, 5th ed. London: Pitman, 1953.

Drucker, Johanna. The Century of Artists' Books. NY: Granary Books, 1995. Fox, Gabrielle.

Glaster, Geoffrey. An Encyclopedia of the Book: Terms Used in Paper-making, Printing, Bookbinging and Publishing. Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1960.

Golden, Alisa. Creating Handmade Books. NY: Sterling Publishing, 2000.

Hubert, Renne Riese, and Judd David Hubert. The Cutting Edge of Reading: Artists' Books. NY: Granary Books, 1999.

Johnson, Pauline. Creative Bookbinding. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963.

Kaar, Joanne B. Papermaking and Bookbinding; Coastal Inspirations. Guild of Master Craftsmen Publications, 2003.

Klima, Stefan. Artists' Books: a Critical Survey of the Literature. NY: Granary Books, 1998.

Laferla, Jane and Gunter, Alice. The Penland Book of Handmade Books: Master Classes in Bookmaking Techniques. Lark, 2004.

La Plantz, Shereen. Cover to Cover. Asheville: Lark Books, 1995.

Lyons, Joan. Artists' Books: Critical Anthology and Sourcebook. NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985.

McCarthy, Mary and Manna, Philip. Making Books by Hand: A Step-by-Step Guide. Quarry Books, 2000.

Reimer-Epp, Heidi, and Reimer, Mary. The Encyclopedia of Papermaking and Bookbinding: the Definitive Guide to Making, Embellishing, and Repairing Paper, Books, and Scrapbooks. Philadelphia: Running Press Book Publishers, 2002.

Smith, Keith, and Jordan, Fred. Bookbinding for Book Artists. NY: Keith Smith Books, 1998.

Smith, Keith. 1,2, & 3 Section Sewings: Volume II of Non-Adhesive Binding. NY: Keith Smith Books, 1995.

Smith, Keith. Sewing Single Sheets. Vol. IV. NY: Keith Smith Books, 2001.

Smith, Keith. Non-Adhesive Binding. Vol. 1. NY: Keith Smith Books, 1993.

Smith, Keith. Exposed Spine Sewings. Vol. III. NY: Keith Smith Books, 1995.

Smith, Keith. Quick Leather Bindings. Vol. V. NY: Keith Smith Books, 2003

Smith, Keith. Structure of the Visual Book. NY: Keith Smith Books, 2003.

Spector, Buzz. The Book Maker's Desire: Writings on the Art of the Book. CA: Umbrella Editions, 1995.

Watson, Aldren Auld. Hand Bookbinding, Manual of Instruction. NY: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1986.

Webberly, Marilyn, and Forsyth, Joan. Books, Boxes, and Wraps. WA: Bifocal Publications, 1995.

SCENARIO 1 CONTINUED:

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[If there are any additional resources you would like to add, please do so below. If the resources are among your top five most helpful resources, please rank them. Please add any additional information you think would be relevant]

(Author, Title)

SCENARIO 2: *MINIATURE BOOKS*

A graduate student is researching the history of miniature books for an assigned paper. The paper is to include an overview of the topic, the books' influences, and a list of resources used.

Bliss, Carey S. Incunabulum. NY: Hillside Press, 1986.

Bondy, Louis W. Minaiture Books: Their History from the Beginnings to the Present Day. London: Sheppard Press, 1981.

Bondy, Louis W. Small is Beautiful. Miniature Book Society, 1987.

Bradbury, Robert C. Antique United States Miniature Books, 1690-1900. North Clarendon: Microbibliophile, 2001.

Edison, Julian I. Miniature Books. St. Louis: Julian I. Edison, 1970.

Elton, Charles Isaac. Little Books. FL: Ford Press, 1977.

Hanson, Robert F. Discovering Miniature Books. NY: Opuscula Press, 1978.

Koopman, Harry Lyman. Miniature Books. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1968.

Sheringham, H.T. A Library in Miniature. London: The Java head Bookship, 1948.

Thomas, Peter. More Making Books by Hand: Exploring Miniature Books, Alternative Structures, and Found Objects. Gloucester, MA: Quarry Books, 2004.

Weber, Francis J. Minibibliophilia. CA: Dawson's Book Shop, 1979.

Welsh, Doris V. The History of Miniature Books. Albany, NY: Fort Orange Press, 1987.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[If there are any additional resources you would like to add, please do so below. If the resources are among your top five most helpful resources, please rank them. Please add any additional information you think would be relevant]

(Author, Title)

REFERENCES

American Library Association. American Library Directory: a Classified List of Libraries in the United States and Canada, with Personnel and Statistical Data. New York, NY: R.R. Bowker Company, 2004.

Greenfield, Jane. ABC for Bookbinding., New York, NY: Oak Knoll Press, 1998.