Artists’ books are interesting and unique works that can be used across disciplines, but are often underutilized in many institutions. This study examines three different artists’ book collections in the Southeastern US for methods of how materials are accessed and used. The study also examines collection development practices within each collection in order to provide a deeper understanding into the distinct nature of artists’ books. Data for access and use was gathered through website and OPAC analysis and physical site visits. Additionally, interviews were conducted for information on collection development, as well as access and use. This paper analyzes current methods for access, use and collection development of three existing artists’ book collections in order to identify problems and issues while providing suggestions for improvement.

Headings:

Artists’ Books.

Libraries -- Special Collections – Artists’ books.
CURRENT METHODS FOR ACCESS, USE AND COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF ARTISTS’ BOOK COLLECTIONS

by

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Introduction

Artists’ books are unique resources that possess a wealth of information and knowledge relevant to multiple disciplines; however, they are surprisingly underutilized and rarely accessed by library patrons. Teetering between the world of art and book, artists’ books have inevitably found a home residing in libraries because of its book-like form. Debates have ensued for decades over what defines an artists’ book, and it seems relatively easier to define an artists’ book by what it is not than by what it could be. First, it is not a book about art or an artist, and second, it is not an illustrated book by an artist. An artists’ book is a work of art in its own right that draws on the book form and can become a book/art object. The materials, techniques, content, structures and formats are so diverse that the possibilities are virtually limitless.

With such a unique nature, artists’ books generate a multitude of issues from storage and access to preservation and cataloging, among others. The majority of libraries have defaulted to the same stipulations and guidelines that are used for Special Collections materials, which include restricted access and special storage. Typically, patrons must know about a specific item in a special collection in order to access it. Since collections are often behind closed doors or stored in metal cabinets behind circulation desks, patrons cannot simply brose through materials as they can in the regular stacks. Online public access catalogs can be difficult to navigate and search for unique items like artists’ books. For instance, if a patron wanted to view examples of flipbooks about animals, several subject heading searches could be performed and results slowly
narrowed, but there are no guarantees that all materials in the collection have been catalogued with book genres, or if artists’ books have even been given subject headings based on their content. The problems that arise with such restrictions mean that collections are left hidden, not browsable by patrons, and unusable to a large user community. There are, however, ways to expand use and access through promotion of the collection, web resources, and visual catalogs and databases.

This paper will examine access, use and collection development of artists’ book collections in libraries. The first portion of the paper will discuss what artists’ books are and how they are used in order to create a concrete understanding of the materials discussed. Additionally there will be a literature review focusing on what artists’ books are, ways in which they are used, and the collection development, access and use of these collections. The results and observations section of this paper will discuss the data gathered from already existing collections in order to form a framework for standard methods and practices for accessing, storing and developing artists’ book collections. Finally, recommendations for expanding access and use to artists’ book collections will be made; these were determined through literary and site-specific research, which drew upon examples of successful, active artists’ book collections.

This study will investigate the access and use of artists’ book collections with research into how these collections are developed for a deeper understanding of the collection’s purpose and goals. Three large universities with artists’ book collections in the Southeastern US were identified and used for this study. For privacy reasons, no institutions or persons are identified. Research was first conducted online to establish methods for access. Preliminary research showed that the main way for accessing
collection information was through each institution’s online public access catalog. In order to best assess the physical nature of access and use of the collections, institutions within driving distance of Chapel Hill, NC were chosen so that site visits could be performed. Interviews were conducted with librarians at each site to give a better perspective of the overall access, use and development of the collection.
Artists’ Books: A Framework for Consideration

Debates have ensued for decades on what defines an ‘artists’ book’ since their arrival in the 1960s. Artists’ books are created by artists and draw upon the book format to convey a range of images, text and ideas. Materials range from paper, plastic and metal to feathers, hair and fabric; formats of artists’ books vary from photograph narratives, tunnel books and sculptural books to flip books, collages, and pop-up books. The variety of materials, content and formats that are used to create these unique objects are vast and continue to change and evolve. For a selection of examples of artists’ book, please see Appendix A.

The history of artists’ books is a complicated one; it has evolved over years and years from traditional bookmaking, fine press books, livre d’artistes and livre de luxes. Many researchers, such as Drucker and Bury, have traced the earliest innovations of text and image to the work of Aldus Manutius, William Morris and William Blake. Their printing techniques and elegant designs, combined with handcrafted illustrations, binding and woodcuts have demonstrated the early advances in the combination of text and image in nontraditional styles (Burkhart “Mongrel Nature” 250). The livre d’artiste and livre de luxe formats of books began in Europe in the early 20th century, which featured illustrations by a well-known artist created specifically for a special text by a contemporary writer. Livres d’artistes were made popular by Ambroise Vollard, a French publisher, who published works by Paul Verlaine, Pablo Picasso, Pierre Bonnard and Edward Degas, among many others (Bodman, 5). A Century of Artists Books by Riva
Castleman is an exhibition catalog filled with *livres d’artistes* that include many of Vollard’s publications.

Soon, artists in America began experimenting further with the book form, creating a new dialogue between art and book. Jasper Johns’s *Book* (1957) is an excellent example of this combination. Using found objects in his work, Johns removed the text, and in turn, replaced it with paint and brushstrokes that beg the viewer to unravel and “read” his reinterpretation of *Book* (Bright 86). Around this time, artists saw the book as a new art form able to carry ideas and concepts to countless people without the confines of the art world. This new form was inexpensively produced, small in format, and generated by commercial means in unnumbered and unlimited editions. One of the most notable works at this point in time was Ed Ruscha’s *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations*. Ruscha’s book consisted of black and white photographs of different gasoline stations, where the structure and physical nature of the book is diminished. Although the idea of the ‘democratic multiple’ was important to the field of artists’ books, it cannot be used as the main criteria for determining what is and what is not an artists’ book (Drucker *Century* 69-78). Through the late 1970s and 1980s, the artists’ book genre matured, drawing on all areas and subjects to convey original thoughts and ideas through an assortment of new techniques and materials.

Definitions for artists’ books span a variety of intellectual concepts and theories. The following is a list of several definitions of artists’ books from major scholars in order to present a more complete view of opposing viewpoints:

Artists’ books take every possible form, participate in every possible convention of book making, every possible “ism” of mainstream art and literature, every
possible mode of production, every shape, every degree of ephemerality or archival durability.
-Johanna Drucker (*Century* 14)

A book or book-like object in which an artist has had a major input beyond illustration or authorship: where final appearance of the book owes much to an artist’s interference/participation: where the book is the manifestation of the artist’s creativity: where the book is a work of art in itself.
-Stephan Bury (Kulp 5)

Treasures of intricate craftsmanship, artists’ books take every possible form, include every artistic medium and method for bookmaking, and engage every subject from food and family to politics and poetry, familiar tales to wild fantasy.
-Judy Larson (Wasserman, Niffenegger and Drucker 9)

The livre de peintre gains its prestige, and sometimes beauty, by juxtaposing original graphics and fine letterpress printing of a special text. The artist book, however disruptive of tradition, strives for cohesion among its constituent parts by giving equal status to images, typography, binding, page-setting, folds, collages, and text. The reader must search, if not necessarily for perfect coherence, at least for a unifying purpose, within and outside the text.
-R.R. and J.D. Hubert (11)

Neither an art book… nor a book on art… the artists’ book is a work of art on its own, conceived specifically for the book form and often published by the artist him/herself. It can be visual, verbal, or visual/verbal. With few exceptions, it is all of a piece, consisting of one serial work or a series of closely related ideas and/or images – a portable exhibition….Usually inexpensive in price, modest in format and ambitious in scope, the artists’ book is also a fragile vehicle for a weighty load of hopes and ideals.
-Lucy Lippard (Klima 33)

… falling into the category of book art… defined as books in which the book form is intrinsic to the work. One way of determining this is to consider whether what is presented in a given book could equally well be shown on the wall, or still be conveyed by photocopies or photographs of the original… book art is dependent upon the book form.
-Clive Phillpot (Klima 22)

Turning to a shelf of artists’ books, one can re-enter an intimate encounter with a work of art. Artists’ books offer oases in a media-saturated world, antidotes to mega-shows and mega-spectacles, something real, something imagined, something to stimulate both the senses and thought presented through a one-on-one relationship experienced in privacy. An artists’ book made by an artist that can invoke the wondrous initial experiences of childhood reading, as we learn to read and see at the same time, all over again.
Artists’ books are distinguished by the fact that they sit provocatively at the juncture where art, documentation, and literature all come together. Indeed, one of the characteristics of the field is its mongrel nature. It is populated with many subspecies and hybrids, and ultimately dissolves easily into the larger universe of books, pamphlets, and magazines. What really characterizes artists’ books is that they reflect and emerge from the preoccupations and sensibilities of artists, as makers and as citizens.

-Clive Phillpot (Artist/Author 32)

Today, artists’ books still cannot be defined because often the definition becomes too narrow and limiting. Artists have taken text, image and the book format to undiscovered levels. From traditional codex formats to unique, one of a kind book ‘sculptures’, artists’ books explore all boundaries of the book as an object. Decisions are made based on how the book functions as an object, how pages are opened and turned, viewed in a sequence, and the limitations of the page. Choices about layout and design, materials, inks, collages and bindings are carefully weighed and considered to determine how a viewer will interact with the book as object (Drucker *Century* 359). The possibilities are endless.

Floating between the art world and libraries, artists’ books found a natural home within libraries due to their format. The very nature of artists’ books requires special attention in their handling, storage and preservation. Numerous collections of artists’ books have emerged in the US, specifically within academic libraries. Methods for access and use to these collections are still being researched and developed, and with the progression of technology more approaches must be investigated alongside the growth of artists’ books collections.
Literature Review

There has been a significant amount of literature written about artists’ books within the past twenty years as the book art form has become more and more widely recognized. The term ‘artists books’ (with no apostrophe) first appeared in 1973 as the title of an exhibition created by the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, followed two years later by exhibition catalogs, interviews, books, conference, exhibition reviews and critical essays. Around 1980 the Library of Congress added the term to the list of established subjects. By the 1990s several journals had devoted entire issues to the subject of artists’ books; however, only one monograph emerged in 1995, Johanna Drucker’s *The Century of Artists’ Books* (Kilma 7-12). Debates have ensued since the beginning of how to define the term ‘artists’ books’ and to this day, no consensus had been made.

This literature review will investigate literature on artists’ books in five categories that are geared towards how artists’ book collections are developed, used and accessed: (1) defining and understanding artists’ books, (2) artists’ book collections, access and use, (3) exhibition catalogs, (4) artists’ books as educational tools, and (5) virtual artists’ books. Many books, articles and websites have been created in an attempt to comment on what makes an artists’ book into an artists’ book. A large portion of monographs written on artists’ books can be found in the form of exhibition catalogs. Some include short essays by notable scholars in the field of artists’ books, while others give
explanations and motives of the artists’ books showcased in the exhibition. Information on artists’ books as educational tools and their use within academic institutions mainly take the form of scholarly journal articles, and very few articles have been written on virtual artists’ books and the issues surrounding them. Similarly, discussions on access, use, collection development and investigations of specific artists’ books collections also find their place within a variety of scholarly journals in the fields of art and library science.

Defining and Understanding Artists’ Books

Many works that attempt to provide a framework for understanding the nature of artists’ books take the form of literature reviews, anthologies and surveys. These texts tend to synthesize and rehash information that already exists. One major text first published in the field is Joan Lyons Artists’ Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook. In this text, Lyons has gathered critical essays from notable scholars, such as Lucy Lippard and Clive Phillpot. While Lyons’s anthology is a great place to start with research, it focuses heavily on artists’ books as a cheap, mass-produced vehicle for artists to reach beyond the confined gallery walls of museums. The context for the majority of the essays was relevant in 1985 when the book was published and provided a framework for the state of artists’ books at that particular point in time.

The quintessential work for doing any research regarding artists’ books is Johanna Drucker’s renowned The Century of Artists’ Books. Drucker’s text is the first monograph to be written on the subject of artists’ books in an attempt to provide “an overview of the development of this artform by mapping a history of major areas of activity in artists’
books over the last hundred years and offering a critical structure for looking at work in this field” (vii). It remains to be the only text aimed at understanding the complex nature of artists’ books, while analyzing different contexts and reasons for creation. Drucker also provides numerous examples of artists’ books that stretch the bounds and limitations of the field.

Literature reviews can be very helpful for research of a topic, as well as providing numerous sources for information. In 1998 Stefan Klima wrote *Artists Books: A Critical Survey of the Literature*. Klima’s text is an excellent resource for researching the historical context of artists’ books, as most of his review focuses on literature from the 1970s and 1980s. Many definitions of the term ‘artists’ books’ are given and analyzed; in this manner, Klima establishes a sort of ‘definition history’ for artists’ books from decades of comments by scholars. Another literature review by Louise Kulp, “Artists’ Books in Libraries: A Review of the Literature,” provides a different view than Klima. Kulp’s literature focuses on three main areas concerned with the topic of artists’ books in libraries: collection development, cataloging, and collection use. In this manner, Kulp is able to provide a view of artists’ books in terms of librarianship, and how one can collect, develop, preserve, manage and provide access to such unique works. In conjunction, Klima and Kulp’s works can create an interesting and informative framework for the development of artists’ books as a medium and within a library setting.

**Artists’ Book Collections, Access and Use**

A variety of scholarly articles discuss access and use of artists’ book collections; some articles focus specifically on particular artists’ book collections, while others
present general overviews of collection development, access and/or use. While Terrie Wilson focuses entirely on the aspects of a written collection development policy in “Collection Development Policies for Artists’ Books,” Stephen Bury examines different themes for collecting scopes in “1,2,3,5: Building a Collection of Artists’ Books.” Wilson, librarian at Michigan State University’s Fine Arts Library, utilizes her own institution’s collection development policy, drawing on the natural structure of collection development policies in order to illustrate how artists’ books collections can be included as a subset of the larger collection development policy of the institution. Wilson also discusses potential selection criteria, such as artistic quality/physical appearance, edition number, technique/structure, price, and reputation of artist and/or press, as well as brief mentions of preservation, housing and access (28). Bury’s article draws on three existing collections of dissimilar institutions, the Arnolfini Archive, the Tony Zwicker Collection and Chelsea College of Art & Design, and uses different types of artists’ books to illustrate the diverse collection scopes. The four main categories Bury gives are the history of artists’ books, the book format, publishers, and format and thematic approaches.

One article that provides a comprehensive overview of artists’ book collections written by Andrea Chemero is entitled “How Libraries Collect and Handle Artists’ Books.” The article was based on a survey submitted to ARLIS-L in 1999 in which twenty-seven institutions responded. Chemero’s survey investigated the full range of building, managing, promoting, and protecting artists’ book collections and also comments on ways to expand access and description, which are discussed in the conclusion section of this paper. Chemero’s study breaks down by percentage how
artists’ books are acquired, selection criteria, preservation and storage methods, and promotion and display approaches. While the article is kept very brief, it is filled with useful, pertinent information that will benefit most studies of artists’ book collections.

Presenting a similarly comprehensive view of artists’ book collection is Ford’s “Artists’ Books in UK and Eire Libraries.” Whereas Ford breaks down selection, acquisitions, cataloging, storage and conservation, and exploitation of artists’ books, he focuses specifically on collections within the UK and Eire libraries, eliminating many large collections in the US; still, many similarities are shared between UK and US libraries, so the information contained in his article is still very relevant to research on artists’ book collection. While Ford draws on different collection development policies, he also includes some common issues that have arisen in each of these areas. Despite the article being published in 1993, many of Ford’s future recommendations are still related and pertinent to artists’ book collections of today, regardless of country.

Two brief, but informative, articles target specific institutional collections to discuss access, use and collection development of artists’ book collections. ‘Using and Conserving Artists’ Books at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’ by Doro Boehme first talks about the ways in which the collection is used. The collection’s main use is for students and supports the curricula of classes taught at the Art Institute of Chicago. Boehme also mentions an annual artists’ book competition that provides promotion of the collection and further development of student and faculty work. In the last half of the article, conservation issues that arise with storage, frequent handling and exhibitions is explored, and also how these issues can affect selection of new materials. ‘Artists’ Books in the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum’ by Jennie Farmer first provides
background information on artists’ books with defined terminology of the terms used, such as livre d’artistes and book art. Farmer outlines the collecting scope of the NAL, which documents the history of the artists’ book throughout the 20th century, and then discusses the development of web resources like the Artist’s Books Visual Database. Previous methods of access, like a printed, visual registry of a limited number of books, and the issues associated with the process of accessing materials demonstrates the need to expand access (28-30). Farmer further illustrates the scope of the collection with short descriptions of artists’ books from the collection.

Artists’ Books as Educational Tools

As artists’ books collections find more and more uses within their host institutions, many colleges and universities are integrating artists’ books into multidisciplinary curricula. Within the past ten years literature about artists’ books as educational tools has been developed and explored. While there are very few books geared specifically towards artists’ books in educational settings, the majority of literature in this area is published in scholarly journal articles.

The literature ranges from example exercises to use in the classroom to recording existing educational uses of artists’ book collections at differing institutions. Suzy Taraba takes a closer look at several different colleges and universities and their uses of artists’ book collections in “Now What Should We Do With Them?: Artists’ Books in the Curriculum.” Taraba examines are Amherst College, the Claremont Colleges, Mills College and Wesleyan University, and finds that artists’ book collections are being used
across disciplines. For example, at Wesleyan an American Studies class on houses and homes in American culture viewed artists’ books such as Marshall Weber’s *The House of Ghosts* to view the illustrative processes and home imagery. Music students also utilize Wesleyan’s artists’ book collection to study unusual ways of how dance notation and music are combined (113). Another example Taraba illustrates is at one of the Claremont Colleges, Harvey Mudd, where a humanities class for science and engineering students called The Book in Western Culture studies the structure of artists’ books (115). More examples range from English courses on poetry, political studies and history courses.

Other articles, such as Byrne and Hansen’s “Chopsticks, Toilet Paper and Other Odd Things: Artists’ Book Collection in an Instructional Setting,” focused specifically on the Art Institute of Chicago’s Joan Flasch Collection at the Flaxman Library. The article concisely summed up the major uses of the artists’ book collection not only in the classroom, but also in creating a “visual catalog” and the annual Book Arts Competition from the Cleveland Institute of Art Library (74). A small subset of literature on the educational use of artists’ books give practical exercises for use in the classroom. One of these articles is Burkhart’s “Articulate Activism: Artists’ Books Take Issues.” In this article, Burkhart takes three artists’ books and examines the context of each while presenting information about the artist, the artwork, and discussion questions and activities.

Burkhart also wrote another article that takes a more in-depth look at the conceptual nature of artists’ books and how the ideas presented through this medium can be used in a variety of subjects. The first half of the article focuses more on the characteristics of artists’ books and some of the early predecessors of artists’ books. The
second half of the article attempts to categorize types of artists’ books by their contextual framework. Some of these include word plays, conventions of the books, appropriations, performance/instructions, narrative/sequential, democratic multiple, assemblages, and digital books (253-259). Through each category, Burkhart illustrates how artists’ books of that nature can fit throughout multiple disciplines.

**Virtual Artists’ Books**

A small amount of literature encompasses the presence of artists’ books on the web. Some book artists have begun to incorporate digital media and websites into artists’ books, while others have turned completely to the web as a new medium for artists’ books. Carolyn Speranza, a book artist, talks about her work on the web in “An Artist Speaks: Working on the Web and Its Antecedents.” In her short article, Speranza talks about using the World Wide Web as a new medium for her book art. The way in which Speranza sets up her web art using a grid of html-fames technology creates the same experience and distribution of Xerox books that she used in her work a decade earlier (45).

One article by Boehme, “What is It? A Discussion of Virtual Artists’ Books,” debates the pros and cons of virtual artists’ books. Not only does Boehme take issue with the actual format of virtual artists’ books, but she looks further into the problems and issues that may arise in regards to access, use and preservation of virtual artists’ books for libraries and archives. Some parallels are drawn between Fluxus and performance art to virtual artists’ books in regards to capturing, documenting and collecting for this
particular type of art. Although Boehme takes no specific side, she does present a myriad of questions to consider and weigh before virtual artists’ books are incorporated into the collection.

In addition to Boehme’s article, there are others, such as Allen, Zelevansky, Andrews, Russell and Minsky’s “Book Art & Web Art: A Forum.” In this article, the five authors discuss the tangible qualities of the book form versus the form of the electronic page and the screen. Relationships between text and image in both formats are conferred, and short ‘in defense of computers’ is given to combat against comments of craftsmanship and quality of work achieved through more traditional methods. In the end, the article makes the reader reflect on how digital materials can provide access to information, text, images and ideas very easily and quickly, but physical interaction with book-like objects is still an important aspect for human beings.

**Exhibition Catalogs**

A huge portion of literature on artists’ books has been written to accompany exhibitions, or in some cases, the book acts as an exhibition itself. Other exhibition catalogs showcase works from a particular printing press or publisher. Exhibition catalogs can easily identify particular themes and styles that are common amongst artists’ books while giving insight into the idea and meaning behind each work. Short essays often accompany exhibition catalogs and can range in topics from a particular artist to a group of artists’ books with a shared theme, or even the medium of the artists’ book itself.
Exhibitions of artists’ books are created for countless reasons. Some highlight a particular group of artists while others are united by a common theme or format. *Off the Shelf: New Forms in Contemporary Artists’ Books* is an exhibition catalog that showcases some of the more cutting-edge formats that contemporary artists’ books have taken. One example included in the exhibition is by Francesca Gabbiani entitled *White Book*; this work, inspired by a personal connection to the novel *Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson, uses print or laser-cut paper miniatures of architectural structures found within the historic World Fair of 1893 in Chicago. Violent and disturbing text provided by Amy Gerstler references the story of a serial killer on the loose by Erik Larson presents an interesting juxtaposition of imagery and text (8-9). *White Book* is an all white accordion-fold book with intricately detailed pop-out structures that entice viewers to transport themselves to another place and time.

The Milwaukee Art Museum presented an exhibition of handmade artists’ books by Wisconsin artists, focusing rather on a particular group of Wisconsin book artists. *Verbal Text/Non-Verbal Context: Handmade Books by Wisconsin Artists* presents a small introduction to the exhibit followed information on each artist. Each artist’s section provides one image of their work from the exhibition, an artist statement of intent, and a listing of the artist’s educational background, exhibitions, bibliographies and titles of book works. This particular exhibition catalog can be extremely useful for research on a particular artist included in the exhibition while providing examples of handmade artists’ books.

Other exhibition catalogs can show the history of styles and themes in artists’ books, such as *Artists’ Books from the Traditional to the Avant-Garde*. Published in
1982, the examples from the exhibition are over twenty years old and are not necessarily considered avant-garde presently, but they can provide an excellent historical perspective of the progress and work being made in the field at that particular moment in time. Short blurbs from the artists included in the exhibition dominate the majority of the exhibition catalog, giving more of a voice to the artist rather than the book objects produced by them. Excerpts from the works included in the exhibition, most often only a page, are included with the artist’s blurbs. An introductory essay by Clive Philpot, an important scholar in the field, discusses the state of artists’ books in 1982.

Another exhibition catalog with a lengthy essay by Clive Philpot published in 1998 presents his view of the medium almost twenty years later. *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists’ Books* provides a different look at exhibitions and exhibition catalogs. The exhibition furniture and the exhibition catalog were both designed by artists. The book presents large, colorful layouts of the works included in the exhibition with multiple views and layouts. Text and image are segregated into sections that rotate throughout the book.

One of the more impressive exhibition catalogs was created to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. With 108 artists’ books by women, *The Book as Art: Artists’ Books from the National Museum of Women in the Arts* presents the exhibition by themes, which include storytellers, nature, food and the body, travelers, historians, autobiographers, dreamers and magicians, mothers, daughters and wives, and inspired by the muses. Such a variety of themes showcase many major works by women book artists in a multitude of materials and forms. This is a particularly great resource because it presents such a wide array of artists’ books from the
1970s to the present. *When Will the Book Be Done?: Granary’s Books* is another great resource similar to *The Book as Art* because of the number and variety of artists’ books shown; however, *When Will the Book Be Done?: Granary’s Books* also includes books that serve as great resources in the artists’ books field, such as works by Johanna Drucker and Stefan Klima that were discussed earlier. *When Will the Book Be Done?* is a compilation of works published by Granary Books from 1985-2001, creating an exhibition catalog of works published by Granary Books in a specific time frame.

Lastly there are exhibition catalogs that feature a particular artist’s work, but are not necessarily based on a particular exhibition such as *Creating with Abandon: Process in the Artists’ Books of Angela Lorenz* and *Objects/Encounters: Bookworks at Flying Fish Press*. *Creating with Abandon* shows artists’ books from Angela Lorenz while documenting the process in which she creates her works. Photographs of Lorenz working in her studio during the various stages of creating book works identify the process of creating an artists’ book. One of the interesting things about this exhibition catalog is that pieces of the original idea for the work that are abandoned during the process are shown and documented to help the reader understand how each book work takes form throughout the creative process. *Objects/Encounters* is about book artist Julie Chen and her own press Flying Fish Press. This catalog also serves to document the process of Chen’s works from 1987-2001. Each piece included has a discussion of the artist’s intentions and context for the work, as well as author Connell Gallagher’s commentary.
**Problem Statement and Methodology**

Artists’ books are a valuable resource little known to library patrons. Collections are most often housed behind circulation desks and have specific usage guidelines that restrict use and access. This requires the patron to inquire directly at the front desk in order to even access materials within the collection. Many libraries use guidelines similar to those found within rare book rooms and special collections. This includes more security and supervised use of materials. Often times, users will need to know the title, author and/or call number prior to accessing the collection, which means that users should have a direct need for a specific resource. Without additional collection resources, such as online finding aids, research guides and detailed catalog records, users encounter difficulty locating necessary resources and may go without the knowledge of the available resource’s existence. Libraries can employ several tools and techniques to enhance use and access of artists’ book collections, such as special exhibitions and events, web pages, digitization and detailed, image enhanced OPAC records.

This study was first created with the idea of using three artists’ book collections within driving distance of Chapel Hill, NC. After performing general research on artists’ book collections and inquiring with colleagues, three universities were identified to hold strong artists’ book collections. Each of the three sites selected are universities with large student bodies located in the Southeastern United States. I determined that research should be completed to investigate each collection’s online presence and physical
presence in order to best assess all means of access and use. Institution names were not used in this study, and each site is identified as Site A, Site B and Site C.

Research for this study was completed in three separate steps in order to assess methods of access, use and collection development. The first step was to assess each collection’s online presence through the library’s website. A chart was created to keep track of the type of information available from each university’s library website regarding their artists’ book collection.

In order to find relevant information, keyword and subject heading searches using the term ‘artists’ books’ were completed using the online catalog. Keyword searches were also completed using the term ‘artists’ book’ through a basic site search using the most visible search box on the main library web page. Keyword searches using the same search term was completed on Google.com as well.

The second step was to investigate each collection through site visits. Information for access and use was gathered through physical interaction with the collection. During each site visit, I was able to physically encounter the setup and layout for the housing for each artists’ book collection. This allowed me to gather information on how the collection is physically accessed, steps for accessing the collection, how it is used within the library’s environment, collection visibility to patrons and area for usage of collection materials. Detailed notes were taken at each site visit to note some of the more common characteristics, as well as the more diverse aspects of each collection. Additional criteria for site visits were added to the original informational chart in order to keep track of all information gathered at each site.
Personal site visits provided a level of physical-interaction information that I could not gather through any text, image or website. Site visits also allowed me to become the patron in the study and to experience the process of using and accessing materials from the artists’ book collection. During each visit I was able to request, handle and use materials within the physical space of the collection permitting a more intimate knowledge of the collection that was essential for this study.

The third step of this study was to conduct interviews with individuals identified as the main person in charge of the artists’ book collection at each site. Persons were identified through personal and professional references that identified each person in charge of their artists’ book collection. No names were used in this study, and interviewees are identified in this study by their corresponding sites as Librarian A, Librarian B and Librarian C.

These interviews were conducted in order to best understand collection development methods for each collection. Each interviewee was originally contacted by email to request an interview. The original email had an attached document that outlined the basic questions I would be asking during the interview in order to better prepare each interviewee for the type of information I was seeking. Because each collection and level of use and access vary, a set of guiding questions was used, but not strictly enforced. I found it extremely important that each interview be tailored specifically to the collection in order to best assess and analyze the needs and methodology employed for access and use. In order to completely capture all information exchanged in the interview, I used a tape recorder to record the entire interview process. I also took notes during the interview to jot down important aspects of the conversation and to give me a general outline of the
interview to refer back to at later points in time. Librarian C did not want to be recorded, so detailed notes were taken in lieu of the recording.
Observations and Results

This section of the paper is divided into three segments by type of research: (1) qualitative data gathered through online research of each institution’s library website, which includes OPAC searches and evaluation of web resources; (2) qualitative data gathered from physical site visits where collection materials were accessed and used; and (3) qualitative data and information obtained from interviews with the librarian in charge of the artists’ book collection at each site. The data obtained for the virtual and physical presence is summarized in a chart, Appendix B, and the guideline questions used in for the interviews can be found in Appendix C.

Online Research

The first portion of my research was completed entirely through online research of each institution’s library website. The main method of access to each collection of artists’ books is through the Online Public Access Catalog. Through the OPAC, patrons are able to access records for materials found within the artists’ book collection; however, a patron would need to know information such as title, author or publisher. Searches conducted used the term ‘artists’ book’ for both keyword and subject searches. Results from all three sites rendered materials that were actual items from the artists’ book collection as well as items related to the subject of artists’ books. If a user simply wanted to see the holdings within the artists’ book collection at each site, time-consuming
browsing of the search results was the only possible option through this channel. Subject heading searches presented the best results for accessing collection information.

After completing ‘Artists’ Books’ subject heading searches in each site’s OPAC, the type and level of information included in a random selection of records was recorded. All three sites had detailed information included in their OPAC records for artists’ books beyond the basic information of title, author, publisher and location/call number. Such information includes, but does not necessarily always include, subject headings, physical description, edition number, and brief summaries. The most prominent information given at each site when the record was first entered was title, author/artists, location and call number, immediately letting the patron know how to find that particular resource. Some records also included an image of the item, but the majority of records returned in my searches did not have an accompanying image.

Upon further investigation of the catalog record, I found additional information that would help users identify themes and formats found within the collections. For example, Site C has recently begun adding book art genre form entries to all artists’ book records. This allows student to search the catalog for specific types of artists’ book formats, such as photography narratives, tunnel books, and flip books. All three sites also included subject headings that are related to the theme of the book. For example, one record of an artists’ book from Site B includes subject headings on ‘Artists’ books by women’, ‘Clothing and dress’ and ‘Artists’ books—United States.’ Site A also included subject headings that were a mix of book art genres and themes. For example, one record has ‘Artists’ books—Mexico’ and ‘Flip books’ as subject headings. Overall, all three sites were inconsistent from record to record at the amount of detail included in each
record. Older materials seemed to have fewer amounts of information and subject headings, suggesting that as artists’ books have become more and more prominent collections, the amount of time and energy put into cataloging has increased in order to provide a greater level of access through the OPAC.

Site A and Site C both had strong virtual presences for their artists’ book collections, while Site B’s virtual presence was somewhat weaker due to lack of information. While each site has a website focused specifically on the artists’ book collection, the depth of information varied greatly. All three sites include collection background information with links for searches within the online catalog. This is particularly helpful for users who are not familiar with more detailed OPAC searches, such as subject heading searches.

Site A boasts a very detailed subject guide that gives a patron multiple resources for further information about artists’ books in general as well as the library’s artists’ book collection. The subject guide provides numerous, helpful resources that can be found on the web, as well as resources that are located within the library itself, which increases access to numerous sources of information on artists’ books.

Site B has a website labeled as a subject guide, however, it does not contain the same level of informational resources as Site A. With a short introduction to the collection, Site B also includes a list of notable book artists, short synopses of approximately thirty-two selected artists’ books, and a list of additional resources. Some of the selected works did not even contain any additional information besides the location, and not necessarily with a call number. The fact that in some instances not even a call number or location was given with the listed resource could be very discouraging
for any user interested in accessing one of the recommended books. Without location information, the user is left to their own judgment on how best to find the material; some may just resign the task and choose other resources that have location information. Such a lack of consistency in information decreases possible access and use of materials that have been chosen and recommended to represent the collection.

Site C’s website for artists’ books only included brief collection information and a listing of outside resources for the book arts; however, Site C did include a digitized online exhibition that features an artists’ book. Also, Site C was the only institution that included links to digitized copies of artists’ books that are hosted by outside institutions. Although the links presented in both the OPAC records and within the artists’ books webpage are to outside sources, access is increased for all users.

**Physical Site Visits**

Physical setup and layout of a library and its collections can dictate how materials are discovered, accessed and used by patrons. The physical nature of the collection can also determine how patrons are exposed to different materials and collections housed within large and small libraries. All three sites investigated in this study store artists’ books collections out of sight from patrons, and access is only gained through approaching a library worker at the desk or main entrance area of the collection.

Each site offers restricted access to their artists’ book collections. Site A’s collection is housed behind the main circulation desk in large metal filing cabinets. Materials are organized within the filing cabinets by call number. The majority of artists’ books are contained within protective enclosures that include basic metadata on the
outside, such as title, author and call number. Site A holds its artists book collection within a small art library, while Sites B and C hold their artists’ book collection within their Special Collections department. The Special Collections department for both sites is located within the larger main library on campus, and holdings are placed on metal shelving units behind closed doors. Patrons must first enter the main library and then locate the Special Collections department. New users must fill out the typical forms included for using any Special Collections. The majority of materials are placed in protective enclosures. Site B, however, houses smaller portions of its artists’ book collection in multiple locations on campus. The majority of the collection is housed within Special Collections, but some artists’ books are housed within the main stacks at other specialized libraries, such as the art library. Some of these materials are kept within the locked stacks area; however, others are not. Site B includes very limited identifying metadata on the outside of its enclosures. The materials housed within Special Collections only included a barcode on each item, while other items included an accession number, and/or title. Overall, Site B seems to be more disorganized with their holdings, and the collection is somewhat disconnected due to multiple locations for storing materials.

Site C was meticulously organized into four categories that are based on format. Every item is labeled with an accession number that it receives upon its arrival. The first part of the collection is smaller-sized artists’ books that are placed in manila file folders and kept in archival storage boxes. The second part consists of regular codex format artists’ books placed standing on the shelf amongst other artists’ book resources, such as reference resources and how-to materials for creating artists’ books. These additional
artists’ book resources can also be found in the regular stacks of the library. The third part of the collection consists of unusual formats for artists’ books. Some of these materials are placed directly on the shelf, while others are placed in protective enclosures that sit on the shelf. The fourth and final part of the collection is for the extremely larger format artists’ books that are typically shelved flat.

Collection development policies can be especially helpful for providing a collecting scope while establishing parameters for collection areas. Site C was the only institution with an established collection development policy for artists’ books. Although Site C does not have a policy devoted solely to artists’ books, a section of the main library’s policy is devoted to the artists’ book collection. Site A does have a collection development policy in progress, which is planned to include collection development information for their artists’ book collection. Site B does not have a specific collection development policy, but instead has a list of guiding questions that are used when acquiring new materials. This list is not public, but can be used if patrons have specific collection questions.

Exhibition spaces can be a huge part of making an artists’ book collection more visible. Interestingly, only two of the three sites have exhibition cases specifically for artists’ books. Site A has a small exhibition case setup next to the circulation desk that holds new artists’ book collection acquisitions. The location of the exhibition invites patrons to check out new materials while waiting for assistance at the circulation desk. Site C’s exhibition cases are extremely large and run the length of the wall outside of the Special Collections department. Due to their large nature, the exhibition cases are able to showcase a wide variety of artists’ book formats. Small blurbs of information including
title, author and date, are included in the exhibitions, allowing patrons to conduct further research on the works or to access the materials at a later date.

Although none of the artists’ book collections are visible from the circulation/reference desk, each of the three sites includes visible usage guidelines placed near the seating areas for viewing collection materials. Sites B and C’s artists’ book collections, which were housed in Special Collections, have separate reading rooms for viewing materials. Both of these sites include usage guidelines that apply to all of special collections materials and require the patron to sign-in before using any materials. Site B requires that all personal materials besides laptops, paper and notebooks, to be locked and stored in lockers before entering the main reading room where materials are accessed. Site C, on the other hand, allows personal belongings to be brought into the reading room where materials are accessed. The remaining site, Site A, has a designated study carrel located behind the circulation desk, next to the artists’ book collection. The usage guidelines are located on top of the large, metal filing cabinets that hold the artists’ book collection.

The level of security for all three sites consisted of restricting use of materials to a specific, designated area that library personnel can monitor. Site B additionally had a camera installed in the reading room to record all patrons using materials. Cameras were located in Sites A and C as well, however, their purpose was focused mainly on the library as a whole, rather than the specific area where artists’ books are used.

Overall, Sites A, B and C present access in a similar manner; although Site A is not located within the Special Collections department, the layout and method for access is quite similar. Usage guidelines are made visible and patrons are monitored during usage.
Precautions are taken, such as no food or drinks being allowed in the areas, to prevent damage beyond physical handling of materials. The majority of items in all three collections have some sort of protective enclosure and are kept safely in secure areas, albeit some artists’ books at Site B. Sites A and C store their collections in an organized manner, allowing materials to be located easily by library personnel. These two sites also visibly promote the artists’ book collection through exhibition cases located in well-trafficked areas.

**Interviews**

Before interviews were conducted, a set of guideline questions was constructed; identified interviewees were contacted by email and were given the list of guideline questions. This list can be viewed in APPENDIX B. The questions addressed three specific areas related to artists’ books: access, use and collection development. The main method for recording data was through an audio recording of the interview and notes. Librarian C declined to be recorded, so detailed notes were taken instead.

The first portion of each interview began with questions of access. Librarians A, B and C stated that placement of the artists’ book collection was already in place when they began working at each site. Librarian A stated that the collection had previously been located in several different spots before reaching its current location; however, the collection was always housed behind the circulation desk on shelves. Librarians B and C stated that due to the unique and fragile nature of artists’ books, the Special Collections department was a natural fit for housing and storage. All three librarians agreed that the access methods put into place were based on the same guidelines used for all Special
Collections materials; since Sites B and C house their artists’ book collections in Special Collections, access methods were already established and in place. Similarly, all three librarians said that the main method for access to collection information was through the library’s OPAC.

Online guides were used at all three sites in order to offer additional information for access to collection information. While Librarian A was in charge of the creation and updating of the subject guide for Site A’s artists’ book collection, Librarians B and C did not control the creation or updating of their site’s online guides. Both were unsure how often the guide was updated, if at all. For additional formats of the collection, Librarians B and C said that there were no additional formats of the collection available online, while Librarian A informed me of some future projects that are in progress, such as a Microsoft Access database of the artists’ book collections. This project was originally created to be included in Artists’ Books Online, a digitized collection hosted by the University of Virginia, but is currently only used for internal purposes. Librarian A is making plans for the information contained in the database to perhaps be added to Site A’s OPAC, which would provide users with even more additional information about the collection. Another project Librarian A has underway for the artists’ book collection is adding photographs to ARTstor, an image database. These photographs often include the cover and one to two additional photographs of the inside of each artists’ book. Additionally, Librarian A was the only one who had an index list of the artists’ book collection available. The list was originally compiled as part of a project by a Library Science graduate student; however, the list was created in 2004 and has never been updated.
The second portion of the interview dealt with the use of artists’ book collections; use varied greatly between the three sites visited. Librarian A gave several uses for the collection, but the day to day use of the collection was very low, with perhaps one to two patrons per semester requesting to view materials. Occasionally, Librarian A will receive a phone call or email from someone interested in artists’ books who wishes to come and view the collection. Librarian A will pull some highlights of the collection for the interested party to view. According to Librarian A this happens approximately six times per year and takes about two hours per visit. Usually, Librarian A said that these requests are made by local artists and book artists, but there have been visitors from the New England area as well. The main use of the collection arose from the need of a book arts class at Site A. Librarian A would pull several examples from the collection to be viewed by the book arts class; the faculty member in charge of this class is one of the collections main users and incorporates the creation of an artists’ book as a part of the class. There are also other courses at Librarian A’s institution that use artists’ books during classes, such as the Art Librarianship course. Other uses of the collection include exhibitions (which is typically for the exhibition case located within Site A) and for special events, such as literary festivals, where small, informational workshops use artists’ books to introduce the public to this particular type of medium. There is also a large collaboration in the works with a neighboring institution for events and exhibitions specifically for both institutions’ artists’ book collections.

The main uses for Site B’s collection are very similar to Site A. Librarian B said that the collection was infrequently used for research, perhaps one to two times per semester. There is also a book arts class that uses the collection in the same manner as
stated above for Site A. Interestingly, Librarian B said that a dance class came in to view the collection to gain inspiration for set designs and dance movements. Librarian B also mentioned English and Women’s History classes that had come in to view artists’ books for further research on the different types of information presented in these subject areas. Other uses of the collection given by Librarian B are for uses in symposiums and book making workshops; Librarian B also said that the artists’ book collection is something that is always kept in mind when planning different programs for Site B.

Differing greatly from Sites A and B, Librarian C said that the artists’ book collection was very busy as it is used on a daily basis by students, faculty and community members. The instructional uses for the collection ranged from graphic design and photography classes to fashion students, English classes investigating broadsides, and typography/letterpress classes. Librarian C usually keeps several trucks with different examples of artists’ books at the ready for classes and students to view. Each cart has different themes or formats of materials that fit easily along with the types of classes that come to view materials. Another major use of the collection was through exhibitions. According to Librarian C, frequently materials are loaned out for exhibitions at other institutions, ranging from universities to book arts centers throughout the country. There are also exhibition cases located within Site C that hold items from the collections as well. Librarian C also discussed community outreach programs that are in place where artists’ books are taken to local middle and high schools for students to view and discover.

The third and final portion of the interview was concerned with collection development. Collection development policies can be an integral part of any collection.
They establish guidelines for the collection and provide a definitive scope for inclusion or exclusion of materials. Librarian C was the only librarian to have a collection development policy in place for the artists’ book collection; the portion concerning artists’ books is part of the Special Collections department collection development policy. Librarian A reported that a collection development policy was in the works, and Librarian B showed me a set of guiding questions that are used when making acquisition decisions.

Methods used for purchasing new acquisitions were similar across all three institutions. Librarian A, B and C reported using specialized book vendors, such as Vamp & Tramp, as a main method for purchasing new artists’ books. Each librarian stated that they enjoyed working with such vendors because the vendors become familiar with each of their collections, and thus present them with materials that are relevant to the collection and within their budget. In addition, all three librarians reported being approached by the actual book artists’ themselves, requesting that the library purchase their works for inclusion in the collection. Librarian C said that when this happens, it is extremely helpful to have a collection development policy in place if the works do not fit in the collection, or if the library has run out of funds. There are other instances where Librarians A, B and C will contact individual book artists to purchase their works, particularly if it is an artist that the library collects. Collection focuses are discussed later in this section.

Another method of acquiring materials shared by all three sites is the receipt of donations. Donations can be from the actual book artist, alumni, faculty members, prominent figures in the artists’ book world who have close ties with the institution, or community members. Librarians A and B informed me of other library personnel from
other departments who share an interest in artists’ books that are able to allocate some of their funds for the purchase of materials that correspond with their department. For example, Librarian A said that one library staff member who is in the Latin American Studies department at Site A usually purchases a few artists’ books from Latin America during purchasing trips to the area. This allows Site A to acquire materials only sold and distributed in Latin America. Lastly, Librarians B and C spoke about ordering materials from publisher’s catalogs, such as the Women’s Studio Workshop.

The selection criteria given by each librarian was mixed and varied, although all three librarians agreed that the major part of selection was based on their collection scope. Librarian A stated that good craftsmanship was one criteria often sought when examining new materials since items in the collection were often used as teaching tools for studio art students. Librarian A felt is was important for the students to see and experience items with good craftsmanship and artistic merit, although Librarian A said the level of craftsmanship was wide-ranging. Other reasons for selection given by Librarian A were content, price and gut instinct. Librarian A is a book artist, so there is a greater level of understanding in the materials; Librarian A tries to acquire works that have multiple layers of meaning and that can be used time and time again, with each use bringing a newer understanding or interpretation of the materials. Librarian B said that the selection criteria largely depended on the quality of content and not necessarily the craftsmanship of the work. For example, some student work, which is poorly constructed, has been included in the collection based on the quality of the content within the work. Likewise, Librarian C also stated that selection of some materials is based upon this same strategy of quality of content over quality of craftsmanship. Librarian C particularly tries
to select materials that are aligned with current curricula at the institution. Additionally, Librarian C said that materials that are reflective of current times and events was also important, as well as faculty input for requested materials.

The collection scopes, or specific subject areas, within each collection shared some commonalities, but mainly differed. Librarian A stated that while the collection previously has had no real focus, the library is now trying to focus on local artists, Latin American works, and environmental issues. Librarians A’s collection also said that the collection focuses on artists’ books themselves, meaning a broad representation of styles, themes and formats within the field of artists’ books. Librarian B’s collection had a large focus on women’s studies. This includes body politics, image and beauty, women’s sexuality, health, motherhood and family, domesticity, and women of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds. Within this scope, Librarian B said a range of structural formats, materials and techniques are also sought for inclusion. For Librarian C the collecting scope was representative of the sundry field of artists’ books while adhering to curricula of the institution. Librarian C also said that there were many works chosen based on their ability to reflect what was going on in the world at the current time. Some examples of larger categories within the collection are artists’ books by women, conceptual works, craft-oriented works and Fluxus works. Very rarely, Librarian C said that fine press editions are included in the collection to represent the historical roots of artists’ books.

Overall, each collection presents unique aspects of access, use and collection development for artists’ book collections. While sharing many of the same attributes for access, Sites A and C seem to be developing further methods for access, such as the addition of book art genre entries in the OPAC at Site C and the development of image
collections for ARTstor and supplementary databases at Site A. The level of use varied greatly from Sites A and B with Site C. The use is extremely high at Site C, with the collection being used on a daily basis, while Sites A and B’s collections were only used a few times per semester. The main, shared reason for use of all three collections was for instructional purposes. Collection development of all three collections differed from the use of collection development policies to the subject areas within the collection. Each site gave interesting reasons for selection criteria, which tied in closely with each site’s collecting scope. It can be concluded that the most popular method for acquiring artists’ books is through specialized vendors, and that selection criteria is guided largely by the collection’s subject focuses. Further methods of access and use can be expounded upon and developed by all three sites.
Conclusion and Recommendations

“Artists’ books are a nexus of the sensory and the experiential.” (Burkhart “Mongrel Nature” 262) The current state of access and use to artists’ book collections is still limited, yet there are numerous methods to expand and increase access and use. Current systems for access, such as OPAC searches, rely on users to know specific information about a work or be knowledgeable about searching techniques for library catalogs. Inadequate catalog records create issues for searching and examining collections. Image-based access is essential to artists’ book collection because they are art objects as much as books and merit more than a simple catalog entry (Chemero 22-25). Enhanced OPAC entries with images and additional book art genre headings allow users to perform more detailed searches while gaining visual details about style, layout and format. The Joan Flasch Collection of artists’ books from the Art Institute of Chicago’s Flaxman Library uses advanced catalog descriptions that include physical qualities of the book. Patrons who wish to find artists’ books with handmade paper, offset materials, or items narrative in nature can search the catalog using any of these terms to retrieve records. The system has proved to be effective for patrons while reducing the handling of the collection (Byrne and Hansen 74). Simple functions, such as book art genre headings, create a way for users to virtually browse the collection without physically accessing it, thus still increasing access to the collection’s holdings.

More and more, artists’ book collections are being used for educational reasons. Although collections are mainly used in academic institutions for instructional purposes
countless classes from institutions nationwide, who are unaware of the collection’s existence, could benefit from materials within the artists’ book collection. Some reasons that collections remain undetected could be because of the lack of available information about artists’ books, which has been limited to exhibition catalogs, art periodicals and academic venues. Artists’ books cover a wide array of subject areas and issues, which can be utilized in not only art courses, but also historical, political, social, and theoretical courses. By using artists’ books, students and educators can explore ideas and issues related to multidisciplinary, multicultural, and integrated curricula, as well as the iconic and symbolic nature of the book (Burkhart “Mongrel Nature” 260-261). By performing more outreach activities targeted at the academic community, libraries can increase awareness of artists’ books, which will in turn increase access. Special events, such as bookbinding workshops, can also be a way of promoting the collection while creating an interest in the materials for students and educators.

Exhibitions can be a great method for promoting artists’ book collections, as well as introducing the medium to new users. With such a visual and tactile nature, exhibiting artists’ books can be a challenge, nevertheless, promotion of special collections materials are vital for institutions searching for financial and political support. At the same time, special collections enhance the prestige and reputation of institutions. While exhibitions serve as the predominant method for promotion, it is also how damage can occur from constant handling, exposure to light, fluctuations in temperature and humidity, and traveling conditions. Supplements to exhibitions, such as lectures, guest speakers, and illustrated catalogs can not only enhance the exhibition itself, but also promote information about the collection (Chemero 22-25). Additional activities such as special
lectures, workshops, and book arts competitions can provide outreach and involve the local community, thus increasing awareness and use of the collection.

The advancement of digital technologies has opened many doors for such visually oriented materials, such as websites, image enhanced OPAC records, digitized copies and visual databases. Web resources, such as Yale University Libraries Special Collections “Book Arts Links” website, provides users with links to numerous web resources on artists’ books. Included are links to individual book artists, book dealers and vendors, online exhibits and virtual artists’ books, artists’ book organizations and associations, and other reference resources (“Robert B. Haas”). Other institutions, such as the three sites investigated in this study, that provide websites with collection information, subject guides, collection indexes and additional web resources establish a virtual presence that can increase access and use to collection materials and resources, as well as awareness of these valuable assets.

Other web resources may be presented in the form of digitized collections. One such collection, Artists’ Books Online created by the University of Virginia under the original direction of Johanna Drucker, provides a digital collection of digitized artists’ books. Materials can be fully explored, but the experience is limited and altered, as the only way to “page through” a book is through a series of mouse clicks. For example, *Photo Love* by Suky Best, one book found on Artists’ Books Online, is laid out in a comic book style format with two different narratives. One narrative takes place on the page verso while the other narrative occurs on the page recto; while the entire book is viewable online, clicking through each page in a natural sequential order presents only pieces of each narrative in an alternating sequence (Rettberg). This particular example
demonstrates how some resources are viewed in a more comprehensive manner through a physical experience with the book. Although some digitized artists’ books are best utilized through physical handling and interaction, digital copies of works can still be extremely useful for patrons to browse collections and investigate content, structures and techniques prior to requesting materials. This method increases access and use on multiple levels, while reducing handling and damage through excessive use of delicate resources.

One of the most popular tools for expanding access and use for artists’ book collections is through visual databases. At the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, the Artists Books Visual Database includes images and descriptions of a select group of books from the collection. The project first arose from the difficulties encountered by patrons attempting to find items based solely on catalog descriptions. The collection is treated in the same ways as the collections investigated in this study: holdings are in closed storage, must be retrieved by staff, and thus are not browsable. Many works in the National Art Library’s collection are unique, one of a kind works that are not documented anywhere else; a visual database enhances the ability for users to discover unique artists’ books beyond the catalog (Farmer 27-31). The Art Institute of Chicago has begun using CONTENTdm software to provide a searchable online catalog that includes scanned images of book covers for their Joan Flasch Artists’ Book Collection (Boehme 36-39). In this manner, access is increased by allowing patrons to access visual and textual information while preservation efforts are kept.

Visual searching aids, whether digital or paper, augment a patrons’ ability to search and locate collection materials. The ability to search for art works through visual
measures is not only intuitive by nature, but also superior to searching by words alone. Visual databases become a major means for increasing access to collections while promoting their use and supporting preservation (Chemero 22-25). Patrons automatically have a deeper understanding of an item before requesting it when there is a visual element, like a digital, color image, in addition to the textual information that accompanies the item. In this way, patrons can browse the collection in a serendipitous nature using non-textual criteria (Ford 19). When both text and image are used in conjunction with each other, access and use are at an optimal level. Although Sites A.B and C do not have all of the systems described in this section in place, access and use has been seen to increase with the addition of special workshops, more descriptive OPAC records, and websites and guides.

With so many digital and web-based resources, many discussions and debates have ensued about the future of books. Artists’ books collections illustrate the importance and relevance for tactile experiences with the book form.

“Suspicions abound that the book may indeed have come round full circle. The manuscript book of the Middle Ages was revered for its religious significance, for its rarity and its singular perfection. Perhaps too, the book of the twenty-first century, in its hand crafted beauty, will be revered. The book more than any object produced by humans requires for its operation the complete interaction and participation of the ‘end user’; it appeals to the hand, to the eye, to the mind, and to the heart.” -Gerald Lange (Klima 68)

Lange draws out one of the most important features inherent to artists’ books, which is the overall experience they provide for the viewer. Although digital images and copies of artists’ books can expand access and use of collections, they do not offer replacements of materials. Instead, enhanced OPAC records, websites and web resources, special
exhibitions and outreach efforts, and visual databases offer supplementary means of access to and use of collection information, both visual and textual.
**Works Consulted**


"Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library: Book Arts Links." Yale University Library.


Appendix A: Artists’ Book Examples

The following is a selection of artists’ books from UNC-Chapel Hill Sloane Art Library.

All images are courtesy of Sloane Art Library.

Soap Story: An Artists’ Book by Angela S. Lorenz
Space + Time by Ken Leslie
The Index by Sarah Bryant
The Tower of the Winds by Lawrence G. Van Velzer and Peggy Gotthold
Turn Over Darling—by Ronald King
Winter Elk by Jill Timm
Worldwise by Linda K. Johnson
Love Re-turned by Lois Morrison
Scratch by Kyle Bravo
Parallax by Karen Chance
### Appendix B: Site Research Data Chart

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<th>C</th>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collection Development Policy</td>
<td>In process</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Access</td>
<td>✓ restricted</td>
<td>✓ restricted</td>
<td>✓ restricted multiple locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines for Use visible</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate viewing area/ carrel</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ reading room</td>
<td>✓ reading room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection visible from circ desk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Interview Guideline Questions

ACCESS
1. How did you select an area for placement within your library?
2. How did you determine access methods?
3. Are there finding aids/online guides/subject pages for your collection? If yes, how often are these updated?
4. Are there additional formats of your collection available (for example, digitized copies or images of artists’ books)?

USE
1. How often is the collection used?
2. How many ways is the collection used (internet, exhibitions, class materials, etc.)?

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
1. Do you have a collection development policy?
2. What method(s) do you use to purchase new acquisitions?
3. What selection criteria do you have, if any?
4. Do you share resources amongst other institutions?
5. Is there a specific relationship to book dealers/vendors/authors that needs to be in place in order to obtain items for the collection?
6. Are there specific subject areas within the collection?
Appendix D: Consent Form

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Adult Participants
Social Behavioral Form

IRB Study # 10-0228
Consent Form Version Date: 2/9/2010
Title of Study: Access, Use and Collection Development Analysis for Artists' Books Collections

Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Ann Morris
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: Library Science
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 336-263-2544
Email Address: eamorris@email.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor: Brian Sturm bsturm@email.unc.edu

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this research study is to learn about the best methods and practices for access, use and collection development for artists' books collections at academic universities.
You are being asked to be in the study because you have been identified as the main librarian in charge of your institution's artists' books collection.
**How many people will take part in this study?**
If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately four people in this research study.

**How long will your part in this study last?**
You will only be needed during this study at the time of the requested interview. The interview, which will be done at your institution's library, will last approximately 1-2 hours. There will not be any follow-up evaluations necessary.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**
You will be asked for an interview at a time and location most convenient to you. You will need to reserve approximately 2 hours time for the interview.

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may not benefit personally from being in this research study.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**
There may be uncommon or previously unknown risks. You should report any problems to the researcher.

**How will your privacy be protected?**
Neither you nor your institution will be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

**What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete?**
You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**
You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**
There will be no costs for being in the study.
What if you are a UNC employee?
Taking part in this research is not a part of your University duties, and refusing will not affect your job. You will not be offered or receive any special job-related consideration if you take part in this research.

What if you have questions about this study?
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, complaints, concerns, or if a research-related injury occurs, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

Title of Study: Access, Use and Collection Development Analysis of Artists' Books Collections

Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Ann Morris

Participant’s Agreement:
I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

By checking here, I grant permission for the interview to be audio-recorded.
(Please check)

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Printed Name of Research Participant

Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

Date

Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent