

Discussion Guide - February 22 Session with Editors

College Art Association meeting, Boston, MA

5:00 – 5:05 Introductions/Ground rules

Preamble: There are many people around the table this evening and only two hours for discussion. With that in mind, please try to be brief in your remarks so that we can hear from as many people as possible. My apologies if I have to cut off anyone in mid-stream. From time to time, I may also call on some of the people we've heard less from, so that we can hear everyone's perspective.

.....

5:05 – 5:45 Current publishing practices (in art history and in general)

1. How would you describe your "list" in art history today? Are you looking for the same types of books in art history that you were looking for five/ten years ago? What has changed? What prompted these changes?

Follow-ups:

Are there books in the field of art history that your press published five or ten years ago that would not be published today? Or that would be given different treatment today? Why?

Is the ratio of "scholarly" to "trade" books being published today by your press the same as it was five/ten years ago? Is this true for all areas, including art history?

2. Do art history dissertations (or first books, in general) have the same chance of being published (as books) today as they did ten years ago?

3. Overall, how would you describe the level of commitment at your press today to publishing in the field of art history?

.....

5:45 – 6:00 Sales, marketing, and costs

1. How have sales and marketing (and print runs) of scholarly art history titles changed over the past five/ten years? [Get low-end and high-end estimates.]

Library sales?

Bookstore sales?
Museum sales?
Online sales?

2. How much of the perceived “crisis” in art history publishing is remediable through more and/or larger subventions? Or is the “crisis” about more than subventions?

Are subventions as readily available as they used to be?

3. How much of the “crisis” is due to escalating permissions costs?

6:00 – 6:15 E-publishing

How do you assess the potential of e-publishing with respect to art history titles? [Refer to Caviness piece.]

[Follow-up, but only to understand how art history is different:]
With respect to titles in other fields?

6:15 – 6:45 Implications for art history scholarship

1. What should art historians be telling their students regarding turning their dissertations into books?

How do art history editors identify the best potential manuscripts in the field?

[Follow-up: What about identifying promising young scholars/important dissertations?]

2. What qualifies a manuscript for peer review?

To what extent do your colleagues in marketing have a voice in which manuscripts go to peer review?

[Follow-up, if the opportunity arises:] What does “fitting the list” mean?

[Follow-up, if time allows:] How effective is the peer review process, as a way of evaluating manuscripts for publication?

3. Are books being rejected due to the style of writing? Does the writing need to fit into a preferred style (e.g., less technical terminology, broader, etc.)?

6:45 – 6:50 **International publishing models** [if time allows]

Are there non-U.S. publishing practices that can serve as models for art history publishing in the United States?

6:50 – 7:00 **Final comments**

Possible follow-up survey?