The purpose of this group is to share information, ideas, issues, and resources related to the book and paper arts. Common topics include: new acquisitions, upcoming exhibitions, conferences, competitions, instruction/outreach practices, digital initiatives, preservation, cataloging/access challenges.

Last year at ARLIS in Minneapolis 2011 we had a large turnout compared to Boston 2010. Minneapolis was about 30 participants and Boston was closer to 10. In Minneapolis we discussed items such as: cataloging procedure and controlled vocabulary for artists’ books and the inherent challenges for standardization given their wide-ranging structures, printing techniques, content/subject and overall uniqueness compared to other library materials. We had a poster preview by VCU (VA) Librarians Yuki Hibben and Mary Anne Dyer regarding the book art genre index that they devised for streamlining cataloging. We discussed the need for guidelines to assist librarians, especially catalogers, in what information to capture at the point of acquisition of an artist book. It has been an ongoing desire to have an online form to point book artists, dealers, collectors, and librarians etc. to facilitate the capture of critical information about the book-object at the point of acquisition.

During 2011 there was a post on ARLIS-L by Laura Russel at 23 Sandy Gallery. She is collecting information fields to facilitate cataloging/discovery/info exchange about her book artists and their work and has asked for ARLIS’s feedback. See information fields: http://23sandy.com/works/products-page/fever-of-matter
for an example. Mapping these to MARC fields would be the next step. We will continue to work on this in the SIG and post findings to the SIG blog: http://arlisnabookartsig.blogspot.com/
and on ARLIS-L. I will be asking for assistance from the cataloging community on this topic.

One final note, this year there has been an incredible uptick in ARLIS/NA members interest in the Book Art SIG. I have counted approximately 210 emails of interest from Oct 2011- March 2012. 33 of these have been Canadian; an additional 2 have been outside North America. This is a large amount of email to wrangle so I am focusing efforts on communication amongst the SIG to the blog and on ARLIS-L rather than my personal email. We continue to be a low-traffic group but obviously the interest in book arts is growing. I plan to ask for a co-chair at the year’s meeting to help facilitate discussion and communication with such a large group.