



TALK TO ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN

involved in the photography world over the last decade, and they will affirm that the photographic book market has exploded. The author and critic Bill Jay exclaimed on our pages recently, "When I began my career in photography it was easy to acquire every photographic book of consequence...because they were published at the rate of one every six months."

The photo-eye Booklist is evidence enough that those days are past. Each quarter, we survey the photography book scene and cull the top 25-30 titles out of literally hundreds of books published each season. Never before has there been such widespread interest in the printed image.

Commensurate with this publishing activity, and surely contributing to its cause, is the fact that more art students and working artists are choosing photography as a primary means of expression.

Now more than ever, both aspiring and established photographers question photo-eye, "How do I get my project to a publisher?" As with any meaningful undertaking, small or large, a questioning

process must be embarked upon in order to grasp the task at hand and the proper means for realization.

Over the course of the next several issues, beginning with Fall 2004, writer and consultant Mary Virginia Swanson and I will explore the nuts-and-bolts of what it means and what it takes to publish a photography book. This column, aimed at all photographers who have ever thought about publishing a book of their work, will explore the multifarious aspects that must be considered. Where does this book fit into my career as a photographer? Why do I want to publish? What goals will this book fulfill? Who is the audience? Is the audience for the book different from my work in general? Which publishers target the same audience?

In our first installment of the series we will meet the publishers who create the books that grace the shelves of our homes and offices. This survey of publishers corresponds to a necessary preliminary step on the part of the artist: the research phase. We will probe the all important question, "Who is publishing what?" By surveying what is being produced, and by whom, the reader will gain a broad and quick understanding of the options available.

Over the course of the articles, we will look at all of the steps involved, from editing the work for the right audience to creating a mock-up of a book, from knowing the proper channels for approaching publishers to understanding elements of a contract.

The book is clearly a major promotional tool, but most importantly, a means to a worthwhile end of sharing one's images with the larger community and contributing compelling work to the continuing dialogue of image-makers.

Publishing the Photography Book

Over the course of several articles, MARY VIRGINIA SWANSON and our Editor, DARIUS HIMES, explore the many angles of publishing a book of photographs. Here's a preview.