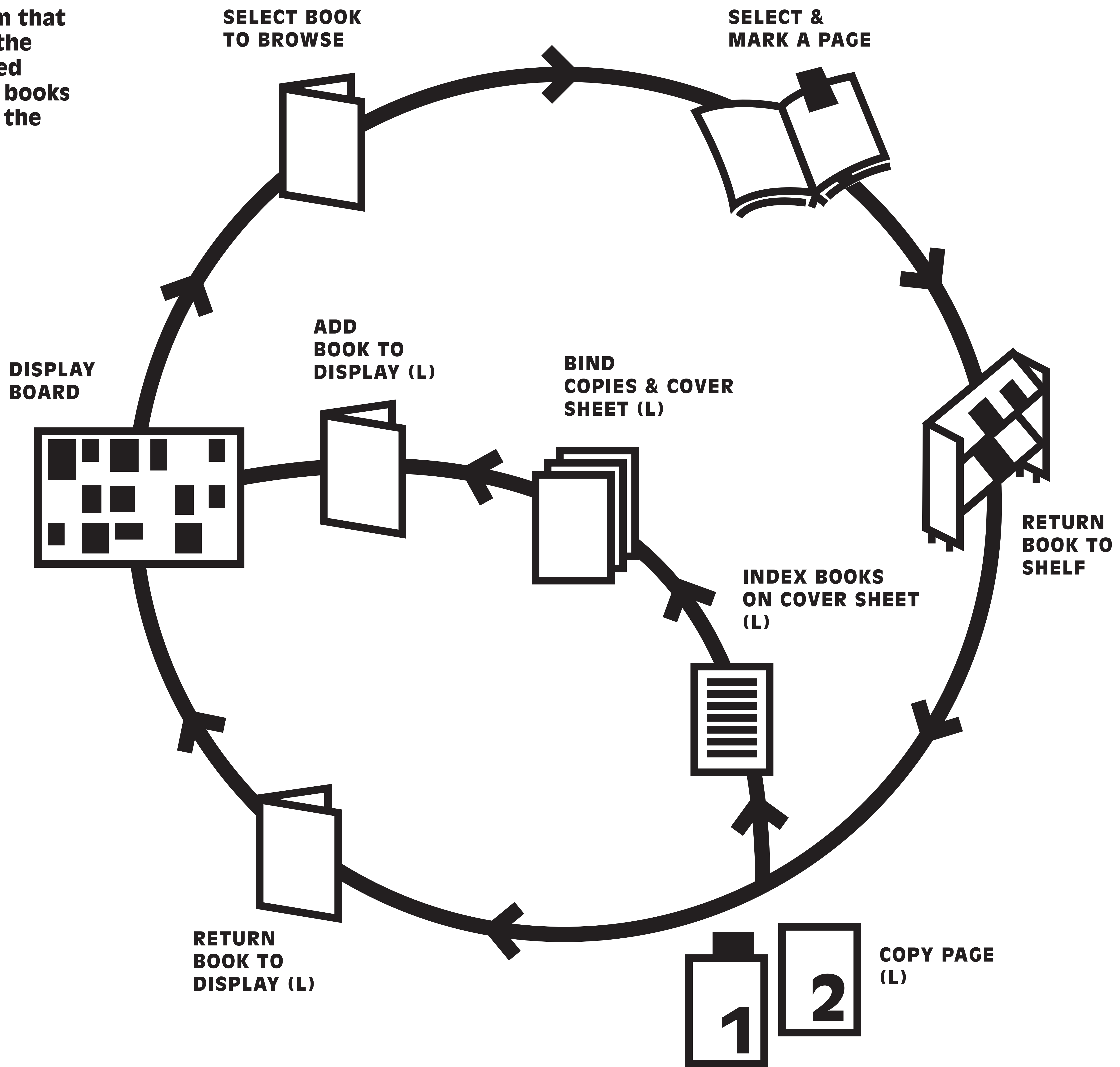


OPEN BOOKS 1

EXHIBITION 21—27
PUBLICATION FEB.
TALKS 2011

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART
HOCKNEY GALLERY

Diagram that charts the proposed flow of books around the space:



COLOPHON
Open Books 1
A project by
Charlotte Cheetham
(Manystuff)
& Sophie Demay
(Department 21)

'Perpetual Proposal'
A space & classification
system by Fay Nicolson
& Oliver Smith

Publication Volume 1.2/3
Designed by Sophie Demay
& Lola Halifa-Legrand

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On opening books

Charlotte Cheetham & Sophie Demay

The experiences are numerous.

Why and how do you show the book?

How do you represent a book in a book (wonderful 'mise en abyme')?

Exploring the use of the book as the exhibited material, in the 'public' space, rather than in a more private sphere, implies a shift, a transformation of its content. If books are being exhibited as objects, then, necessarily, one must wonder about their first purpose: to be read. How do you show and experience them within that particular context?

Is the consultation of a book inseparable from its manipulation? Is there an inevitable dissociation between the book-as-object and its content?

These were the questions that formed corpus of this exhibition.

The book, container & content, shouldn't be exhibited as a 'dead object', in a glass box. It's a living object! Turn the pages, observe the binding details, study the graphic design... All these are required to apprehend the object but also its content & the context of the whole process. Even in a digital and virtual context, the idea of representing and exhibiting a book still makes sense: these initiatives are the proof.

Dispossessed by multimedia of its domination in the transfer and protection of information and knowledge, and of its status of a space for any artistic expression, we specifically intend to demonstrate our commitment to the affirmation of the autonomy of the book which we always believed existed.

The aim of Open Books is to collect & highlight some initiatives which open up our minds and give us cause for reflection.

Each of the projects presented here are one possible answer to these questions of status, manipulation and temporality.

Perpetual Proposal

*A space and classification system
by Fay Nicolson & Oliver Smith*

Perpetual Proposal is a system to initiate and record the flow of books within an exhibition as reading room. The Books all deal with the form and content of the book as a subject. Being interested in mathematician and librarian S.R. Raganathan's Five Laws of Library Science, Fay and Oliver encourage visitors to the exhibition to select books from the peg board display and browse through them at their leisure. Investigating the idea of a reader as both a consumer and (re) producer of knowledge Fay and Oliver ask visitors to select a page using a book mark for our librarian to copy. The rationale behind page selection is left in hands of each reader.*

Throughout his/her shift the librarian will copy and index selected pages, binding them into a compendium that will enter the selection of exhibited books each day. These new additions both document the use of, and add to, the collection of exhibited books.

** Raganathan's Five Laws of Library Science:*

- 1. BOOKS ARE FOR USE.*
- 2. EVERY READER HIS (OR HER) BOOK.*
- 3. EVERY BOOK ITS READER.*
- 4. SAVE THE TIME OF THE USER*
- 5. THE LIBRARY IS A GROWING ORGANISM*

