

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 28, 2013

**Contact:**

Tatana Kellner, Women's Studio Workshop: 845-658-9133

Larry Hertz, Media Relations, 845-518-3098

**Library of Congress Acquires Rosendale Studio's Entire Handmade Book Collection**

*Women's Studio Workshop Collection Called 'Critically Important'*

ROSENDALE, N.Y. --- The dying art of creating a book – as a bound volume of information and entertainment and as a work of art – is being kept alive in a studio in Upstate New York. And the quality and significance of the work being done there has grabbed the attention of the nation's most famous library.

The last of the more than 200 artists' books created over the past three decades at the Women's Studio Workshop were shipped to the Library of Congress this month, completing a \$52,000 transaction. The books' subject matter ranges from original poetry to the impact of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Homestead Act on the growth of the American Midwest to the dozens of plants that grow in vacant lots in New York City. And because they are crafted by gifted artists chosen by a jury of experts in the field, they are worthy of inclusion in the Library of Congress collection, said Mark Dimunation, chief of the rare books and special collections division.

"Many of the books created at Women's Studio Workshop are not only popular, they're critically important works of art," Dimunation said. "As a collection, they document an important era in the book arts – this is a very large gathering of artists, the universality of their quality made them worthy of consideration for our collection. Everyone in the field is aware of the work being done at the Women's Studio Workshop."

Tatana Kellner, a co-founder and artistic director at WSW, said she receives numerous requests for the books every year from researchers, academicians and librarians from throughout the United States and many other parts of the world.

"We get these calls all the time, and they seem to be increasing," Kellner said. "I think part of the reason for their appeal is because books are becoming an endangered species, so there's a nostalgia factor."

Established in 1974 and located in a federal and state historic landmark building in the foothills of the Catskill Mountains, WSW has hosted more than 5,000 artists from throughout the world. In addition to the recent acquisitions by the Library of Congress, its works are on display in more than 300 other facilities, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and libraries at Yale University, Vassar College and many others.

Dozens of artists apply for residency at the workshop, and four or five are chosen every year by a rotating, two-person jury of artists and curators, some of whom made books at the workshop in the past.

Manhattan artist Susan Mills was chosen to create a new artist's book *Twentysix Plants* made from 26 plants grown and harvested at WSW ArtFarm. The title references Ed Ruscha's seminal 1963 *Twentysix Gasoline Station*, often cited as the first modern artist's book, celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. Mills said she was honored to have been chosen.

“The exposure of being a book artist at the Women’s Studio Workshop is fantastic,” she said. “The libraries and other institutions who collect these books mean your work is going to be well known.”

Dawn McCusker, a professor of graphic design at James Madison University, created a book on the impact of the Homestead Act in June 2007. She said the prestige of the studio was exceeded only by the support she received from Kellner and other artists there.

“It’s like one big family there,” McCusker said. “They really give you the freedom to create what you want, but if you need help, there’s always someone there to offer it.”

Susan Chute, WSW’s digital and archival collections consultant and former head of the Art and Picture Collection at the New York Public Library, said she was “ecstatic” the Library of Congress had decided to purchase the entire collection of books created at the studio.

“Now the powerful voices of women who come to WSW to engage with paper and book as a means of artistic expression will be part of the permanent historical record of the United States,” Chute said. “WSW's diverse legacy of engagement with society on the printed page from 1974 into the future will be available forever for poets, historians, artists, scholars and dreamers to explore.”

For more information on Women’s Studio Workshop visit [wsworkshop.org](http://wsworkshop.org).

—END—