COLLABORATIVE MATERIALITY

poetry\poets\letterpress\artist books

Caren Florance (*etc*)

University of Canberra
Faculty of Arts & Design
Centre for Creative & Cultural Research

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ABSTRACT

Collaborative Materiality seeks ways to subvert traditional writer/printer relationships by using experimental collaboration with contemporary poets. It does this by situating the artist book as a flexible vehicle for collaborative research, a form that can act as a common ground for multiple creative practices. What started as a simple desire – to activate both my relationship to printing poetry with letterpress and the reader's interaction with that printing – develops through this project into a series of questing negotiations with materials and studio processes that themselves open up broader questions about collaboration, the motility of ideas and the regional condition of Australian creative publishing.

Letterpress has a long historical relationship with poetry, and there are many publishing crossovers between visual poetry and text art, both of which are instances of the actual writer engaging with the page visually, or the artist performing their own text. This project is more mediatory: I am a print-artist working creatively with a writer's creative output, and my acts of mediation are simultaneously *secondary* yet *primary*. The core concepts are those of textual activity and the open work as championed by Barthes (1977(a) & (b)), Eco (1979) and McGann (1991), both ideas that have been tested over the last half century and that offer relevant pathways with which to approach the making of collaborative works.

I explore the studio's co-responsibilities in several ways, led by the desires of my collaborators. In the first of the two major collaborations, the studio becomes 'a microcosm whose laws can be tested and revised' and where 'play is essential' (McVarish, 2014). Here the poetics of the letterpress process are foregrounded, especially its capacity to perform as close reading. In the second, the distributed cognition embedded in the equipment and my negotiation with it come into play as my collaborator and I re-voice and re-site institutional culture as performed narrative. Notions of time, labour, attention, mediation, constraint, disruption, deterioration, glitch, iteration, affect, embodiment and space are teased out through the *doing* (experiential studio time) and the *done* (the resulting artefact).

Finally, this exegesis presents the various publication outcomes, in an exhibition space that was carefully arranged to encourage interactivity and reading. *Reading Spaces* attempts to create a transferable model of reception that addresses the 'discrepancy between expectations brought to the experience of art and the actual encounter with an artist's book' (Kirschenbaum, 1997: 90). Making the works physically accessible, and in some cases actively demanding reader collaboration extends the *action-present* (Schön, 1983: 62) of the work and encourages further iteration, successfully performing the open work.

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Every work, and each moment of the work, puts everything into question all over again … When René Char writes, 'May risk light your way,' … what is seeking to express itself in these words? Blanchot (1982 [1955]: 87, 246)

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Dedicated to Petr and Dianne, who opened a door to a different world.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

When you see it, you remember what you came for. Harryette H Mullen[i]

This exegesis accompanies my exhibition *Reading Spaces*, held in April 2017 at East Space, Commonwealth Place, Canberra. The exhibition and the body of work within it were the main component of the creative research. True to the origins of the word,[ii] my exegesis is a companion to that work, providing a critical contextualisation of its development and the theoretical approaches to its production. The inclusion of *(etc)* in my authorship is an acknowledgment that I have worked collaboratively for much of the project; my primary collaborators are also given space to articulate their experience through these pages, and their contributions are clearly marked to distinguish their words from mine.

What started as a simple desire – to activate my relationship to printing poetry and the reader's interaction with that printing – developed into a series of questing negotiations with materials and processes that themselves opened up broader questions about collaboration, the motility of ideas, traditional publishing relationships, and the regional condition of Australian creative publishing. Pinning my work to a regional context is vital: some of the issues I discuss are familiar in the northern hemisphere but are less so for the Australian creative publishing community, which has been shaped by critical factors like population and isolation.[iii]

Over the course of this project I have collaborated with a number of poets in different ways: transcreative reproduction; aleatory play; and cross-disciplinary shared composition. My methodology revolved around studio practice itself: I re-explore my letterpress studio as a co-responsible network of distributed cognition and examine the limitations and possibilities that it offers the work. Because the studio's processes are material, centring upon paper and ink, I focus on the workability of the book format as a unifying research environment. However, book publishing is a broad realm, and while over the years I have worked with most forms of creative (and non-creative) book

i From Bergvall, C., Browne, L., Carmody, T. & Place, V. (eds.) 2012. *I'll Drown My Book: Conceptual writing by women,* Los Angeles: Les Figues Press, p. 89

ii *Exegesis* (from the Greek, translated as 'to guide, lead': OED) originated as a word and a concept from the early 17th century when printers began to formalise the hand-written notations that scholars had made in the margins of the manuscript publishings of the Bible. Instead of printing them in the Bible, they formed separate companion volumes. The burgeoning scientific explanations of the time began to be presented as *exegetical*, possibly to adopt the authority of Biblical argument. I learned about this in the February 2017 University of Otago Rare Book School while handling a large number of rare incunabula volumes with Canadian visiting scholar, Scott Scholfield.

iii Australian creative book production is siloed in a way that is not evident in other countries, particularly in the US and the UK. Here there is an increasingly solid demarcation between formats (artist books/art books/photobooks), and no recorded history of the regional field or any kind of formal organisation for makers. See Section 1:15 and 1:16n10.

production, my special interest is in the **artist book**.[iv] It is a form that offers infinite flexibility, thanks to its ability to slip between the cracks of definition,[v] and one of its dominant challenges is finding a satisfactory way to exhibit/present to readers.

My starting point is the open '*poet*entiality'[vi] of the artist book as a research space but the publishing outcomes broadened to accommodate the desires of the poets themselves. Consequently, the work involves multiple levels of close reading, design, and applications of bibliographic code that I have come to frame as *print-performance*. This is a way of differentiating mediatory practice from the primary activity of visual poetry or text art, both of which are instances of the writer themselves engaging with the page visually, or the artist performing their own text. When working creatively with another person's creative output, the act of mediation can simultaneously be *secondary* (reproducing someone else's words) and *primary* (creating a completely new work from them), which takes the work into the realms of ***transcreation*** (de Campos & Gibson, 2007 [1963]). To explore this idea fully, I decided to collaborate with multiple poets, rather than one, to see what variations of practice unfolded. Each has quite different approaches to putting poetry to page, and each allows a braiding of theoretical and material preoccupations.

There are three sections to this exegesis. The first is the *context*, itself in two parts: experience and theory, outlining my influences and preoccupations. I have chosen to present the personal and local first before opening out, as it contextualises my research lens. This first part lays out a short history of the Graphic Investigation Workshop, which was a pivotal moment in Australian book arts history. The central pedagogical methodology of the GIW was collaboration, and this is the first dedicated writing on the subject since its dissolution.[vii] It is important that this sits up front; I was one of its final students, and the experience frames my positioning of the artist book as a genuinely cross-disciplinary vehicle for research, perfect for collaborative endeavours.

The second part of the first section moves outwards, laying out the various ideas that have shaped my creative practice, gleaned from reading broadly across a number of disciplines: bibliography, literature, cultural theory, visual arts, design and craft, among others. The core concept is that of *textual activity* and the *open work* as championed by Barthes (1977(a) & (b)), Eco (1979) and McGann (1991), both ideas that

iv The terms 'artist book', 'artists book', 'artists' book' and 'artist's book' are often used either interchangeably in confusing ways or with one form adhered to regardless of grammatical need. I will be using 'artist book' as an umbrella term to avoid wrestling with apostrophes. If an apostrophe is included, it will be within a quote and respecting the usage of the respective author.

A **bolded term** indicates that it is defined in the Glossary (Appendix 1: 187-192).

v A common working definition is: a book made by an artist. I discuss this further in section 1.2: 30-32.

vi Johanna Drucker's coinage (2008a: np)

vii The Graphic Investigations Workshop is mentioned frequently in short surveys of the regional field, and there is currently an Art History PhD student at the ANU writing about Petr Herel's career, but there is little literature other than their own catalogues.

have been tested over the last half century and that offer relevant pathways with which to approach the making of collaborative works.

The second section discusses the *work* of the collaborative projects, using what Donald Schön calls 'reflection-in-action' during the 'action-present': that is, a flexible period of time in which 'action can still make a difference to the outcome' (1983: 62). My letterpress studio, with its compositional momentum and material negotiations, is actively positioned as 'a place of inquiry and as a site for sustained research' (Sullivan, 2005: 80), 'co-responsible' (Bolt, 2004) for the works thanks to its capacity as a network of distributed cognition (Hayles, 1999). I use the flexible tool of Performance Writing (as shaped by Bergvall (1996)) to facilitate an interweaving of practice and preoccupation, processual performances and the object-outcome. I use notes taken, voice-memo observations, and the writing itself to explore what happens when the compositional negotiations of others interact with mine, with particular attention to my two major collaborations with poets Angela Gardner and Melinda Smith.

The third section steps outward from the studio to provide an overview of the *exhibition* outcome, *Reading Spaces*, which was carefully constructed to encourage interactivity and reading as an attempt to address the '"no introduction" syndrome' identified by Johanna Drucker in conversation with Matthew Kirshenbaum (and echoed by many others) about exhibiting artist books and other creative publications. The problem, she says, is that artist books often have no entry point for an encounter by people who do not know what they are, that they are 'baffling to many first-time viewers' (1997: 90). I attempt to address this by creating reading zones and choosing specific styles of furniture to act as introductory elements.

This exegesis should guide the reader from inception to conclusion, making connections in a narrative style, as storytelling has always been important to my practice. It has truly been a questing project, full of questions and privileging none of them as a primary research topic. It was driven by a feeling of dis/content, the sense that more could be done with traditional means in a contemporary way. I have defined new methodologies of collaboration, explored alternative means of engaging audiences, and cast light on interdisciplinary poetic practices. The conclusion is a necessary project wrap-up, but in reality, the end of this project is a door opening to many new collaborative projects, each testing the boundaries of poetry and page.

PARTICIPANTS

ANGELA GARDNER is a poet and visual artist who until recently has worked as a financial officer within a university to support her creative work. She is an award-winning poet with four books: *Parts of Speech* (UQP, 2007), *Views of the Hudson* (Shearsman, 2009) *The Told World* (Shearsman Books, UK, 2014) and *Thing&Unthing* (Vagabond Press, 2014) as well as two fine press books *twelve labours* and *The NightLadder* (both lighttrappress 2009). She is the co-editor of the *foam:e* poetry journal and lighttrappress (which publishes limited edition poetry books that are commercially printed with original bespoke covers by artists) and is a founding member of the Brisbane printmaking collective, Impress Press. Her visual work centres upon drawing and printmaking. Because we are busy women in different states, our collaboration runs in side-by-side bursts and virtual threads that have long pauses.

MELINDA SMITH is a Canberra poet who writes intelligent and often blackly humorous work, with a sharp political and feminist sensibility, and much of it uses wordplay processes such as acrostics, puns and anagrams. She studied Japanese and Law at the ANU. When we started to work together she was juggling a job in the public service, family members with chronic medical needs, and her writing practice. She won the Prime Minister's Award for Literature in 2014 for her fourth book of poems, *Drag down to unlock or place an emergency call*, which liberated her from her government job but made her no less busy. She was Poetry Editor of the Canberra Times from 2015 to mid-2017. Her latest collection, *Goodbye Cruel*, is published by Pitt St Poetry. She has to be very organised, and prefers to work on set projects with deadlines and strict time management. She jumps upon the chance to dance.

Dr OWEN BULLOCK is a New Zealand poet, and was a PhD colleague at the University of Canberra. He writes many forms of poetry, but is a master of haiku observations. He has published *river's edge* (Recent Work Press, 2016), *urban haiku* (RWP, 2015), *wild camomile* (Post Pressed, Australia, 2009) and *breakfast with epiphanies* (Oceanbooks, NZ, 2012). His haiku have been published widely and anthologised. He has published a collection of poetry, *sometimes the sky isn't big enough* (Steele Roberts, NZ, 2010) and a novella, *A Cornish Story* (Palores, UK, 2010). His doctoral research includes writing on the poetry of Alan Loney, who is also a nexus/gatekeeper in the Australian book arts field. We share an interest in the various uses of space in creative output, and in performative collaboration. He relishes open play and improvisation and is always keen to try new projects.

Dr SARAH RICE is a poet, philosopher and visual artist. She won the 2014 Ron Pretty Poetry Award and the 2014 Bruce Dawe poetry prize; co-won the 2011 Gwen Harwood Prize; and was placed third in the 2014 FAW Shoalhaven Literary Awards. Her first collection is *Fingertip of the Tongue* (UWAP, 2017). Her preoccupations include materiality, material poetics, and embodiment. Her chronic health problems have deeply informed her writing, as has her visual art practice (painting, drawing, ceramics). Sarah finds improvisation difficult; she prefers an agreed system of collaboration, with rules worked out beforehand. She loves to be surprised by interpretations of her work.

SECTION 1: CONTEXT

1.1 EXPERIENTIAL

> *Every document, every moment in every document, conceals (or reveals) an indeterminate set of interfaces that open into alternate spaces and relations.*
>
> *Traditional criticism will engage this kind of radiant textuality more as a problem of context than a problem of text, nor is there any reason to fault that way of seeing the matter. But as the word itself suggests, 'context' is a cognate of text, and not in any abstract Barthesian sense. We construct the poem's context, for example, by searching out the meanings marked in the physical witnesses that bring the poem to us.* Jerome McGann[1]

In the above quote, Jerome McGann is writing about bibliographic code – the material elements of publishing like paper-stock, typefaces, and ink colour – but when I read words like this, I think: *me, I'm one of those physical witnesses*, because that's the sense I got when I picked up my first piece of letterpress type. After years of studying English literature at school and at university, touching those moveable letters opened up text and its contexts in a way that turning pages hadn't. I wanted to spend time – lots of time – thinking with my fingers, slowing down my reading to a heavy metal crawl, and building white space with solid blocks.

After a while, reproducing found texts wasn't enough. Learning to print beautifully with no errors, over and over again... it wasn't enough. While pulling a wet print from the words that I'd **composed** from the textual compositions of others was deeply satisfying, what continually fascinated me was the **makeready proofs**, overprinted and text-shifted. Strange new combinations of words snagged my eye and I would cut them up, fold them and twist them, sew them in layers, or just stash them away in a box-file, thinking something along the lines of *Some day / Some day, soon maybe, / Some day I will root up the anchor which keeps my ship far from the seas. / With the sort of courage that is needed to be nothing and nothing but nothing, I will let loose what seemed indissolubly close to me. / I'll slice it up, I'll turn it over, I'll break it, I'll make it tumble down...*[2]

My first encounter with letterpress was as an English Literature student, and it was also my first encounter with bibliographic theory, mostly about scholarly editing. While the technical particularities of copytexts and usable apparatuses didn't enthrall me, there were moments of spark through the six reading bricks: Number 3 was a number of excerpts from Gaskell's 1974 work *A New Introduction to Bibliography* about material book production, specifically the letterpress printing process, accompanied by a workshop for we students at the Canberra School of Art's Graphic Investigation Workshop (GIW), which transformed my life. Number 5 was readings on 'the multiple text': McKenzie (1986), introducing bibliographic code, Goldberg (1986) arguing

1 McGann, 2001. *Radiant Textuality: literature after the world wide web.* NY: Palgrave: 181

2 Lines from Henri Michaux, 'Clown' (1939), translated by Richard Ellmann in *The Space Within: Selected Writings*, 1951. France, New Directions Books: 233-5. This text populated one of my first art-school books.

against Jerome McGann and Randall McLeod in a way that sent me looking for them, and Parker (1984) who quoted Dewey's thinking about meaning being built into the text at the moment that each part is written: the 'artist is controlled in the process of his work by his grasp of the connection between what he has already done and what he is to do next' (Dewey, 1934: 56). And Number 6 was titled 'who owns the text?', from which Iser's 'The reading process: a phenomenological approach' (1988 [1972]) jumped out.[3]

I forgot much of this through the years, but kept encountering it in a practical sense, through my working life. The GIW workshop completely derailed my plans to be a high school teacher. After that initial weekend-long encounter with the type, I reskilled through night art classes to get into art school to return to the GIW equipment. I worked by day as the Publications Officer for the Australian Academy of the Humanities, learning on the job to desktop-publish by computer (improving, self-driven, by mistake-making). I then funded my art school years by doing computer layout work on a major series of Australian scholarly editions for Paul Eggert, my Bibliography professor, and as a computer tutor to the respected letterpress printer Alec Bolton, who worked with me after meeting over the initial design of the scholarly editions.[4] After Alec's sudden death I assisted his widow, renowned Australian poet Rosemary Dobson, sorting his papers and helping with her own work, one morning a week for over 15 years.

The art school experience, as I'll explain in more detail later, introduced me to concepts that I was slow to digest because I was caught up in the notion of becoming a fine press printer, but those makeready proofs were very seductive. Consequently I have always had various strands of studio output: formal, time-heavy print-production, for my own large projects and as a fine **jobbing printer** for other artists; swatches of experimental printing effects that I often translated over to the digital realm to serve a design job; and quick, often almost flippant pieces, using what I call 'leavings' (or, sometimes, *debris*) from the major work to create unique or small numbers of artist books (Schuller, 2012: 92), playing with whatever themes arose for group shows.[5]

3 I still have the bricks, and these observations are taken from the material traces of my interest: dog-ears, bookmarks and underlinings.

4 The Academy Editions of Australian Literature, published jointly by the Australian Academy of Humanities and University of Queensland Press. I typeset every volume in the series, and designed the layout for many of the genre variations (the original design had only been planned for prose, but there were later editions of drama and poetry).

5 Through the 2000s in Australia, there were few opportunities to show artist books outside of themed group shows or competitions. Book makers often lurched from one theme to another, leaving little time and energy to follow a sustained personal project, and reducing the focus to the craft of book-making. Many of the online archives of these annual or biannual shows (that ran for years) have been taken down due to the demise of the hosting body (e.g., Artisan Bookstore in Melbourne) or 'upgradings' of websites that discard historical data (e.g. that of Noosa Regional Gallery in Queensland).

FIELDING AUSTRALIAN BOOKS

> *There is no other criterion of membership of a field than the objective fact of producing effects within it.*
> Pierre Bourdieu[6]

Bourdieu writes about 'structurally marked practices' within cultural fields being relational to social and educational origins (1993, 70-71). Artists tend to make work by means that relate to the things they have encountered and the financial affordances of their circumstances; to quote Shakespeare, 'Nothing can be made out of nothing'.[7] Until the revolution of the internet, Australian artists working with books operated in regional clusters, with few ways to connect. Journals were valiantly started, and few survived past a few issues unless their focus could be connected with broader interests: the most sustained reportage about Australian artist books is to be found in our national printmaking journal, *Imprint*.[8]

Other than exhibition catalogues, there are only two books to date dedicated to surveying Australian artist books, both based on a small cross-section of work representative of the time at which they were written. Poet and art critic Gary Catalano's *The Bandaged Image* (1983) was published at a time when there was no real field, just 'two paradigms dominat[ing] the concept of the artist book – on the one hand … the highly crafted 'beautiful book' and on the other the utilitarian 'concept book' (Uhlmann, writing about Catalano, 1993: 64).[9] Catalano's book concentrates on the latter, a selection of books made between 1968 and 1983, where the 'conceptual content [is] more important than the production values' (1983: 9) and there was 'a [deliberate] lack of concern for the book as a crafted object'. As he points out, 'they are vehicles for ideas, not monuments to craft' (1983: 17), and they are often produced using cheap processes like the photocopier. His central thesis is that art and literature were perhaps coming closer together at that time, and his choices demonstrate strong overlaps with visual writing and text art. When viewed through a contemporary lens, the books he

6 Bourdieu, 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production*, US, Columbia University Press: 42.

7 Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act 1, scene 4.

8 *Imprint* is a quarterly magazine which has been published by the Australian Print Council (PCA) for 51 years; over the last two decades it made a conscious policy to cover works on paper and artists' books as well as printmaking. The 'valiant' attempts include a single issue of *Wayzgoose: The Australian Journal of Book Arts* (1985), published by James Taylor and the Wayzgoose Press, which advertised but never produced a second issue; the *Australian Book Arts Journal*, published by Linda Douglas, which ambitiously aspired to quarterly output and managed seven issues (2010-2011); and the tri-monthly *Verso* magazine, launched by Alan Loney in 2015, which almost ceased in 2017 after five issues but has recently managed to secure enough funding to continue.

9 What is meant by the former is fine press work, typified by presses such as Alec Bolton's Canberra-based Brindabella Press, inspired by the British & US private press style of production, where text and image are complimentary, predominantly side by side (Richards, 1993); and Tate Adams' Townsville/Melbourne Lyre Bird Press (McBurnie & Adams, 2001), which was inspired by the French livre d'artiste tradition, where images are the main focus, but with textual production that compliments the image production. Both styles privilege the material with luxurious production values and traditional craft bindings.

selected would now be considered either **zines** or **art/design books**, rather than artist books.[10]

Architect, poet and book artist Alex Selenitsch examines a selection of books from the collection of the National Gallery of Australia in *Australian Artists Books* (Selenitch, 2008). Calling the artist book 'a living, changing discipline' (5), he presents four detailed case studies of artists who work with books and then 'performs' the reading of a wider selection of books, standing in for his own readers, as a solution to the no-touch conservation regime of museum collections:

> The best descriptions of artists books seem to be a report of the performance of looking through one, like reports of a trip to another place. The performance of the reader is therefore another narrative laid over whatever narrative the artists book may have.
>
> Following the four essays of artists books on works by Jacks, Maddock, Burn and Parr, sixteen striking and individual books by other artists are described in this manner. These short texts are written as one reader's confrontation with each book, to show how an artists book is an involving and complex experience. Taken as a group, the sixteen books have also been chosen to show the wide range of approaches that currently exist in this ever-expanding field. (11)

Catalano's book was published at a moment when book-making began to transform in Australia, when craft and concept started to seriously interact. By 2008 Selenitsch demonstrates a distinct Australian field. It includes five books from the Graphic Investigation Workshop, by artists Gaynor Cardew (65), Christopher Croft (68), Alexander Hamilton (75), Petr Herel (77) and Paul Uhlmann (102). All of these books were made between 1983 and 1988.

10 When I say 'contemporary lens', I'm locating that lens firmly in Australia; at the time of writing I took part in a conference plenary about the artist book (ABBE, July 2017). One of the panel was Brad Freeman, editor of the American *Journal of Artists Books*, and he agreed with me that the Australian book arts field is more distinctly siloed than the northern hemisphere, with multiple sub-categories applied along a spectrum of making. The category demarcations I have observed in this country are explored in the glossary (Appendix 1) under **Art book**, **Artist book**, **Fine Press**, **Livre d'artiste**, **Photobook**, **Small Press**, and **Zine**, but additional factors within our nation seem to be personality-driven and generational.

THE GRAPHIC INVESTIGATION WORKSHOP: AN INSTRUMENT OF COLLABORATION

> *In 1980, when the first completed Artist's Book lay in front of us, it was also the beginning of a dream. Our wish was to provide, in the space of an Artist's Book, a* common ground*, so the printmakers, the painters, the sculptors and the poets might come together and collaborate, whilst at the same time seeking their own 'interior voice'.* Petr Herel[11]

Despite being the only Australian art school department – ever – to engage seriously with artist books on a full-time level, the Canberra School of Art's Graphic Investigation Workshop (GIW) was not established to make books. Its overarching agenda was finding new ways to pull together multifarious creative practices to service the development of ideas, and over its twenty years of operation, artist books increasingly served that purpose.

The workshop was created in 1978 at the instigation of the Director of the newly formed school, German printmaker Udo Sellbach. He invited Czech artist Petr Herel (1943–) to develop 'a course of fine art based on drawing and the use of paper' (Herel, 1984). It took a few years to fully develop the curriculum: the four main and interrelated components were drawing, the printed image, papermaking and typography (Agostino, 2009: 119). The word *investigation* was the core tenet of the workshop. Well before art schools were prompted to frame their making as research, Herel and his team were teaching students to probe, extend, and collaborate with the ideas of others and each other, exploring and publishing their ideas with any available material means.

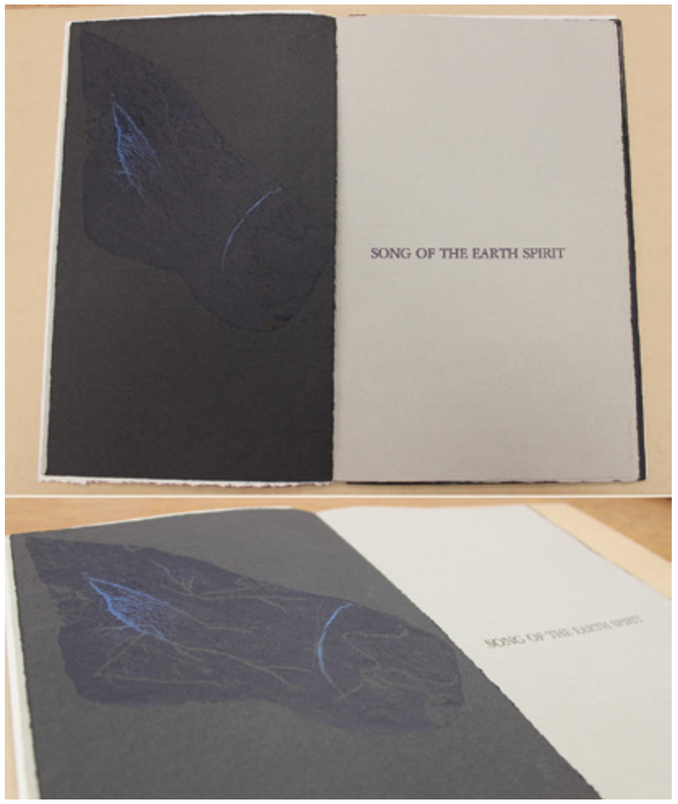
1 Petr Herel, c. 1980.
Photo: ANU School of Art archive

Book, as art

Herel (*IMAGE 1*) came to Canberra with books and collaboration as an intrinsic part of his own creative practice. In 1970 he won a prize for 'the most beautiful Czechoslovakian Book' (Grishin, 1994: 33) and by 1977 he had formed a **press imprint**, Labyrinth Press, with French typographer Thierry Bouchard, to make multilingual fine press volumes, and they collaborated between Australia and France for over thirty years.

The first book made by a GIW student, the one that evoked the above quote, was Mark Van Veen's *Song of the Earth Spirit* (1980) (*IMAGE 2*). It is a simple unbound book of interleaved folds in a paper wrapper, with seven dark direct-relief prints from slate, that have subtle details added with colour pencil, accompanied by the printed text of a Navajo Indian prayer. Its combination of printmaking, drawing and text epitomises what was to be Herel's pedagogical approach to using the artist book as a unifying space, a 'common ground'

11 Herel, 1992 'Where the Language Stops', in Herel, P. & Fogwell, D. (eds.) *Artist's Books and Limited Editions (1): GIW 1980-1992*. Canberra: Canberra School of Art: 5–7. The emphasis in the quote is mine.



2 Mark van Veen
Song of the Earth Spirit, 1980.
Slate prints, letterpress, unbound, edition of 5. Text: Navaho Indian Prayer.

Held in the GIW/Petr Herel Special Collection, ANU. GIWCR_2; GIWML_5. (see fn 19)

for broad practice. Describing the curriculum in 1984 for the catalogue of their first workshop exhibition, Herel wrote:

> In addition, many contemporary explorations widen its spectrum of activity: the combination of drawing, mixed techniques, the printed image, papermaking and the manipulation of paper in various ways, as well as *the development of the 'book as an art form'*, provides a broad field for artistic expression. This last concept evolved from the *need to summarise* the wide range of expressions used in workshop practice and from **a** *deliberate intention to explore alternative space not traditionally used in other areas of visual art*. (Herel, 1984, my emphases)

Herel and his staff constantly played with alternatives to conventional publishing outcomes, and while his own personal taste ran to simple, conservative book forms, he encouraged others to embark in radical directions. The workshop consequently produced a wide range of books, in various combinations of media and style, collaboratively performing the wide range of interests brought into the studios by staff, visiting artists and the students themselves.[12]

12 To see a (fairly comprehensive) list of projects produced by the GIW, there is a special collection of student and staff works in the ANU Library, from PH's collection and works donated by students. The index lists both artists and writers used in each project: http://anulib.anu.edu.au/using-the-library/collections/rare-books-special-collections-and-manuscripts/petr-herel-collection/ (accessed 04/09/2017).

Paper, pages

Among the first batch of teaching staff was Gaynor Cardew (*IMAGE 3*), a local printmaker, cartoonist and papermaker. Cardew tempered Herel's formality with her enthusiasm for paper-play and structural experimentation. Under her influence, many of the books made by GIW students ignored traditional notions of gathering, folding or binding: they were sometimes unopenable objects, cassette tapes, pieces of bone, or paper-pulp installation work.

3 Gaynor Cardew
Photo: ANU School of Art archive

Cardew herself was instrumental in the broader Australian shift toward using handmade paper as a primary material in its own right. Until the early 1980s, craft Australian papermaking rarely produced paper of a quality that could be printed upon, and it was considered inferior for traditional book pages, but in the first years of that decade it had joined other craft practices in searching for conceptual validity in the art world. Most early experimentation within the medium was inspired by painting and collage, in the form of 2D paper-pulp drawings and prints.[13] In 1983, twenty-four Australian papermakers, including Cardew, attended a major international papermaking conference in Kyoto, where they saw a large number of haptic, materially conceptual artist's books that completely transformed their attitudes towards the use of handmade paper in books (Wilson, 1984: 95). This is immediately evident in GIW output: lecturer Christopher Croft produced *Sketch-of-Book* (1983), a long concertina folding of thick handmade paper covered in line-worked etchings, and Cardew made *Requiem to an Epidermis* (1984) where she articulately moves paper-pulp drawing into book pages, eschewing any need for text (Selenitsch, 2008: 68-71; 64-67 respectively).

In 1984, Cardew and fellow Canberran papermaker Katharine Nix were featured in the *1984 Craft Australia Yearbook* for their handmade paper installations and books (Wilson, 1984: 91–101). They also taught bookmaking workshops around the country, supported by a burgeoning interest in paper via textile groups ('fibre' being the connective element) (Carey Wells, 1994: 14-15).[14] GIW students were encouraged to use handmade paper, but at first had to use external papermaking facilities. An exemplar of such student work is Russell Way's 1984 sculptural book *Vicious Triangle* (*IMAGE 4*), which combines a framework of tied twigs housing a book of dyed handmade paper pages. With the encouragement of the GIW and Printmaking lecturers, Cardew and Nix eventually managed to carve out a corner in the art school for a papermaking studio

13 The Australian National Gallery's exhibition and catalogue *Paperwork* (Gilmour & Willsford, 1982) was the inaugural exhibition of the new Department of International Prints and Illustrated Books. It featured 2D works where the paper was the image in some way: embossing, pulp drawing, burns, tears, watermarks, etc. Only three Australians were included: a print on foil by George Baldessin (listed (25) but unpictured in the catalogue); a torn piece by Robert Jacks (44) and a print on recycled newspaper pulp by Bea Maddock (74).

14 Another outcome was a 1984 group exhibition in Tasmania (where papermaking became very popular) called *Ah Tissue* (Button, 1984) featuring Cardew, Nix, and a host of other names including David Watt, who became head of Sculpture at the Canberra School of Art.

4 Russell Way,
Vicious Triangle, 1984
handmade paper, twigs.
GIWCR_49.

Photo: ANU School of Art archive

that was established in 1990 and survived until 2009 (Agostino, 2009: 166).[15]

Text, image, text

Herel's Czech/French education and practice are deeply rooted in poetry and philosophy (Grishin, 1994: 15), and he regularly set texts by poets and writers for the students to work with, especially the French writers that he loved: Mallarmé, Michaux, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Blanchot, all of whom wrote about or worked in ways that extended the meaning of 'book'. He and his staff also encouraged students to find – and write – their own texts to accompany their particular forms of image-making. By doing this he was refusing to privilege image over text nor text over image; the term 'illustration' is a valid one for many GIW activities, not in a derogatory, secondary sense, but in an interchangeable process of exchanging meaning. Thierry Bouchard wrote on this for a 1994 GIW catalogue, no doubt articulating many conversations between Herel and himself:

> The image no longer accompanies; it neither serves nor is dominated. Losing its dependence or its subservient status, it claims equality within the book or even a paradoxical autonomy, while still seeing itself as having an intimate role within the text. This makes for an ambiguous relation, one in which the two factors stand to each other in terms of circulation or 'reciprocity' (Bouchard, 1994: 18).

Bouchard writes as one to whom the production of the text takes as much care and thought as the production of image, and this was also something Herel and his co-workers wanted for their students.

In order to facilitate this movement of text and image within the daily work of the workshop, accessible textual production methods were paramount. In the early 1980s commercial printing was predominantly offset, which was expensive unless you could print in large quantities. **Xerox**, **letraset**, **ronio** and **Gestetner** were all cheap accessible options, used in many interesting ways by the students (and predominantly by conceptual book artists of the previous decade, as noted by Catalano, (1983)) but did not allow the crisp quality and motility across papermedia that Herel desired. Letterpress was still in use by many jobbing printers, and was readily available to buy as processes shifted towards computer output. For a few years the GIW students used the local TAFE trade

15 Cardew herself only lasted until 1999, dying far too young from cancer.

5 Petr Herel, Dianne Fogwell, Peter Finlay: GIW Office, 1987

Photo: ANU School of Art archive

facilities to print with the help of its Photography & Design tutor Peter Finlay (*IMAGE 5*), until Croft managed, around 1984, to procure a press and good quantities of type for the workshop. Soon after, the employment of Finlay as a lecturer ensured support for the equipment.[16] Adding in-house letterpress equipment to the other production choices at that time enabled a freedom of textual experimentation within the workshop that is comparable to the freedom of today's digital printing choices, and the output of more formal books increased accordingly.

Collaborative spaces

> I encouraged them not to think specifically about making an 'artist book' but rather to experiment: to draw, to paint, to work in 3D, to write, to read, to think. Hopefully, at the end of that process, the book they made would be a repository of all those experiences and thinking processes. (Herel, interviewed by Cowley, 2016, 24)

In 2001, looking retrospectively at his 20 years of teaching, Petr Herel called the artist book 'an instrument of collaboration' (Herel & Fogwell, 2001: 27). In fact, his whole workshop was an instrument of collaboration, pulling together staff from the school and artists from Australia and further afield. There were only two full-time staff members at any time, with a wide range of part-time and sessional staff who ensured a vital mix of

16 GIW graduates Ingeborg Hansen and Phil Day named their innovative and successful private press after Finlay, and even after the dissolution of the partnership, the name lives on in Day's Finlay Lloyd imprint.

6 Rhyll McMaster & GIW students, *Red Socks*, 1997
14 multiple plate etchings and letterpress bound in hard cover. Poem by RM & original text by participants.

Held in GIW/Petr Herel Special Collection, ANU. GIWCR_326; GIWML_111.

interests and abilities.[17] The collaborative pedagogy of GIW had a number of iterations: teachers and students working side by side on a project, visiting artists working with staff and including students, and students working together, all usually bound by a theme arising from a text or using text directly. Image-making techniques other than drawing and basic printmaking were taught only when they matched the project, contingent upon the skill-sets of whoever was in the workshop that semester (Agostino, 2009: 120; 223; 228–234). The visiting artists were a mix of printmakers, graphic artists, typographers, papermakers, writers, and in the last years of the workshop, book artists like Ronald King and Ken Campbell (UK) and Donna and Peter Thomas (US) (Agostino, 2009: 236).

These collaborative group projects became the dominant teaching methodology of the workshop. Not always book-centred, the objective was group learning but also the understanding that there were many paths to and from a central idea.[18] There were various starting points: a visiting artist, sharing their particular skill-set (**mezzotint**, say, or photography); or a particular material that suggested further investigation (paper, glass, fabric); or a text that encouraged personal interpretation. Sometimes one of these elements was enough, at other times they all combined. With book projects, the group would either make a communal book, each contributing a page or section (this was most common in the elective class projects) or each participant would create their own complete book response.

An example of the former is 1997's *Red Socks* (*IMAGE 6*), a group book made with visiting poet Rhyll McMaster (GIWCR_2001: 326; GIWML_111).[19] A small section-sewn **codex** with a deep red handmade paper cover, its pages are a combination of thick handmade paper (produced in the school's own facility) and fine Kozo **washi**. There are eight sections, lettered A to H, each containing lines from McMaster's poem of the same

17 A full listing of staff, visitors and students can be found in the appendices of Agostino's history of the School of Art (2009: 226-253).

18 Tasmanian artist Joanne Wild wrote of the GIW in her 1991 Diploma of teaching thesis: 'collaboration projects are initiated at the Graphic Investigation Workshop to encourage competition between students' (Wild, 1991). I suspect that was based on a comment made to Wild by Herel, and meant that students would inspire each other, as a form of group learning.

19 There are two lists of GIW work: the Menzies Library online GIW catalogue, numbered by the initial batching at the time of donation, hereon GIWML_[number], and in the Herel & Fogwell *Catalogue Raisonné*. There are 3 volumes of the *Catalogue Raisonné*: 1994, 2001 and 2004, hereon GIWCR_[date]: [number] (page number), and in captions, GIWCR_[number].

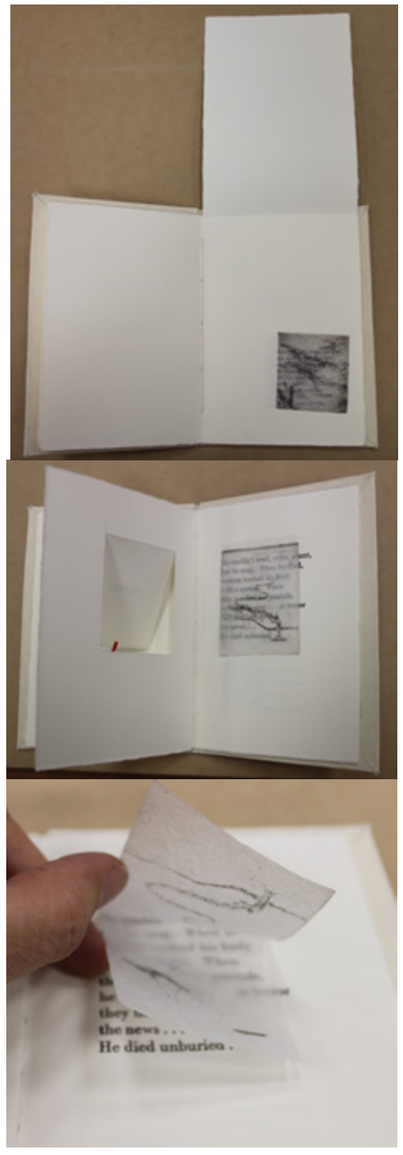
name, and original text and images by the participants, who included staff as well as students. Ten copies were printed, enough for each person to have a copy plus spare for the archive.[20]

The latter is typified by the 1994 project *Orpheus*, which used a poem by Vladimír Holan. The poem was typeset in lead type in two textblocks: the French and its translated English. The 12 participants (ten students and the two teachers) could use these in their own way or set their own, which a few did, to accompany their own responsive texts. I looked at these books in the GIW archive, but only about half of the books made for the project were included in the archive.

Student Jill Wolf made two works: a 24pp book, using selected lines from the poem with **solvent release** images in an edition of 5, which is in the archive (GIWCR_1994: 211 (13); MLGIW_140) and a unique 2-metre-square book installation involving solvent release and Xerox images with letterpress on various papers and wax-coated silk sheets (GIWCR_1994: 212 (13)), which is not.

Bernadette Crockford's book is tiny, only four concertinaed translucent pages with text, but matching up the archive with the Catalogue Raisonné shows that this small piece is essentially the **colophon** for a larger work: a 'book installation and 3D collage' (GIWCR_1994: 219 (14); GIWML_61). Using a colophon, which is a sort of copyright page for an artist book, was encouraged in GIW work, to record the materials used, the edition made and any collaborators involved, as a best-practice method of documenting books.

My favourite student *Orpheus* work is Kirrily Schell's (*IMAGE 7*): she responded with a small canvas-covered book with pages that have layered panels of etched translucent paper machine-stitched over the text like animation frames (asking the reader to move through the images to the words), and disrupt the fold of the pages with flaps, first

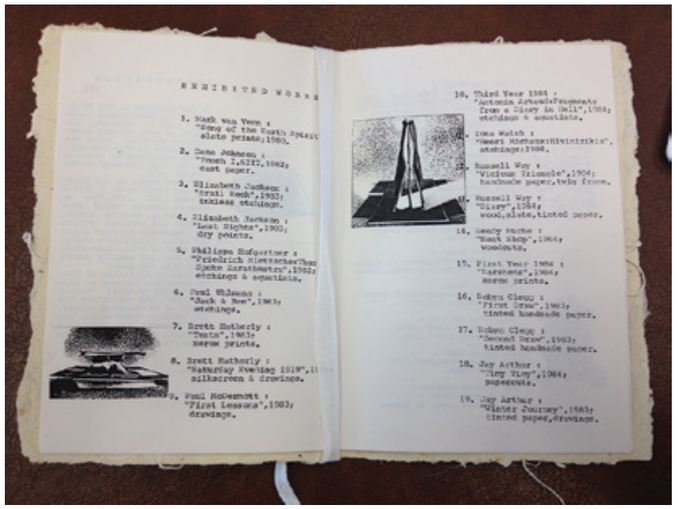


7 Kirrily Schell, *Orpheus*, 1994.

Etchings and letterpress, sewn flaps on pages, bound in hard cover.

Held in GIW/Petr Herel Special Collection, ANU. GIWCR_258; GIWML_49.

20 By this penultimate year of the workshop, including a copy for an archive was standard practice.



8 Petr Herel, *Graphic Investigations Workshop Books 1980–1984*
Catalogue: 12 pages of photocopied typescript & photos. Unbound pages, loosely held together with cotton tape.
GIWML_243, NLA SRp 741.6409947 B724

obvious and then surprising, creating tasks for the reader, making us perform Orpheus's journey down to Hades. (CR_2001: 258 (14)[21]; GIWML_49).

The teachers for the *Orpheus* project were Herel, and Dianne Fogwell who taught side-by-side with Herel for over half of the workshop's span, often taking on the head of workshop. They made their own exquisite books for the project and, with the making, directly demonstrated their own personal practice and processes to the class (CR_1994: 227, 229 (14)). Fogwell recently commented (PERS COMM, 26/6/2017) that they had the luxury of being able to give each group of students an 8-week project and to work on it with them for three full days a week, allowing a concentration and sustained vision that is hard to achieve with undergraduate students now.

Producing effects

Paul Uhlmann observed, in his 1993 Master's thesis, that before the early 1980s the Australian book arts scene was polarised between craft-based fine books and deliberately unpolished, lo-fi conceptual books (Uhlmann, 1993: 64). While the activities of the GIW were not instrumental in filling the space between the two extremities, the workshop, its staff's outreach activities (particularly those of the papermaking practitioners) and its concerted efforts to exhibit work contributed significantly to a quickly growing field.

Herel and his staff knew that the workshop's output was different to anything else happening at the time. The first public showcase of GIW work was deliberately provocative. In 1984, the equally new Canberra Craft Bookbinders Guild organised the first national bookbinding conference at the Canberra School of Art (Rogers, Shannon, Wootton, 1984). In response to it, Petr Herel put together an exhibition of experimental

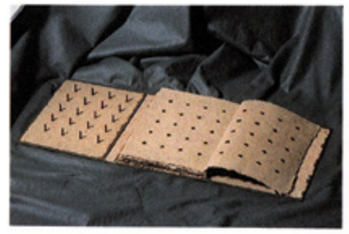
21 The GIW Catalogue *Raisonné* straddles three volumes, with works that had been accidentally omitted in the first two volumes included in the third.

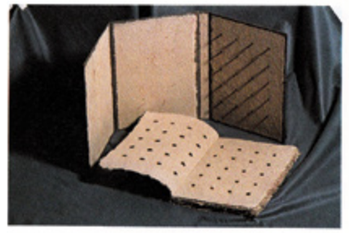
book work done by his workshop staff and students, especially for the visitors (Herel, 1984). As Herel related to me in an interview, his exhibition consisted of 25 book-works (see *IMAGE 8*), ranging from classic French-influenced unbound volumes through to very experimental sculptural pieces, laid out on white-paper-covered tables in one of the GIW studios. The craft binders came to see it in a group and viewed the works as the staff and students carried on their daily activities around them. When I asked about the reactions he experienced, Herel replied that 'the older visitors were startled. They had an air of defiance: ironic smiles. They treated us as amateurs' (PERS COMM, 8/10/2014). Others were excited:

> I believe it is no coincidence that the second exhibition to be opened during the conference was held within and by the students of the Graphic Investigation Department [sic] of the Canberra School of Art. Herel, along with Diane [sic] Fogwell and Gaynor Cardew, worked with a group of second year art students on this concept of book as art. The results were very exciting and certainly tested the boundaries of where the book form could begin to go. (Carey Wells, 1994: 15)

Carey Wells was correct, it was no coincidence. The first exhibition to be opened was a large, formal showing of international craft bindings at the National Library of Australia. Again, provocatively, Herel had contributed a collaborative fine binding to the exhibition. With handmade paper pages by Cardew and a bookcloth hard case by respected local binder Helen Waddlington, from the outside it looked like a regular book. However, when opened, *Stigmata* resembled an Iron Maiden: no text, just a grid of spikes emerging from the inside of the cover, piercing the body of the bookblock through its grid of punched holes to hold it in place. Its catalogue's entry has a distinct air of bewilderment (*IMAGE 9*, Clendinning, 1984: 35); the all-caps preface was added by the curators (and not to any other entry), and the book was positioned quietly in a corner of the exhibition, obscured by a curtain.

This book, and the art school exhibition, obviously made an impact, both institutionally and in the book arts community. Not long after the conference, Herel was summoned to the National Library of Australia for a 'private interview' with a small number of librarians. 'It was like being called to the Headmaster's office,' Herel said; 'they wanted to work out what was behind the exhibition: was I semi-intelligent? Or the real thing?' (PERS COMM, 8/10/2014). He must have passed muster:





THIS WORK IS ENTERED AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE BOOK AS A 'FOUND OBJECT' BY ARTISTS WORKING IN OTHER MEDIA.
(Refer to Ivor Robinson, Ibid. p. 42)
HELEN WADLINGTON (Binder). PETR HEREL (Artist). *Stigmata*. Illust: Petr Herel; 390 × 837 × 25; Materials & Methods: essential part is handmade paper especially made for this book by Gaynor Cardew from indigenous fibres. Also uses rusted nails specially coated.
Artist's Statement: *Stigmata* book attempts to re-create the fragile equilibrium between two realms, the contemplative and the objective. *Maker's Statement*: Traditionally the binder is not directly involved with the author or artist in the book creation whereas in this instance the realisation required close co-operation between the artist and binder to achieve a work in which book and binding are an integrated form. The book block rests within a framework of protruding nails and is not permanently attached to the binding. Visual appreciation of the book requires that the book block be removed bodily from the nails and placed on the adjacent hinged board. This concept provided a new experience for the binder.

9 From Clendinning, RE, 1984, *Contemporary Designer Bookbindings*, Sydney, NSW, Crafts Council of Australia: 35.

the NLA kept the small GIW exhibition catalogue in their collection and began watching the workshop output carefully, supporting them with exhibitions and purchases.

Herel and Fogwell worked hard to promote the workshop nationally and internationally. A catalogue was published in 1988 to mark the first ten years of work, featuring images of a variety of media, but from that point the documentary emphasis focused on the books, which were a much more portable medium than many of the workshop's more experimental outcomes. GIW artist books were exhibited in Melbourne in 1992 (Herel & Fogwell, 1992), and another exhibition toured to the US, Switzerland and then back to the NLA in Canberra from 1994-96 (Herel & Fogwell, 1994; Agostino, 2009: 121). Books from the workshop are widespread, including institutions like the National Library of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia, and the State Libraries of Queensland and Victoria.

Unfortunately, just as the work was gaining serious attention, Herel's health deteriorated. The Canberra School of Art was undergoing major structural changes as it joined the Australian National University, so when Herel retired in 1998, the GIW was merged with the Printmaking workshop to become one large workshop called Printmedia and Drawing (PMD), headed up by Patsy Payne, who had produced a number of artists' books as part of her print practice. After twenty years of GIW activity, 386 books were documented in the *Catalogue raisonné*, with over 247 forming a special collection in the ANU's Menzies Library (Herel & Fogwell, 2001: 27).[22] They are all shapes, sizes and media, but they represent the common ground of questing ideas that Herel was seeking, a gathering of alternative spaces, researching the interrelationship of word, image and imagination.

Dianne Fogwell, who had alternated with Herel as head of workshop, carried on part of the GIW project as a separate studio within the school called the Edition + Artist Book Studio (E+ABS), where PMD students worked side-by-side with visiting artists and writers to create more formal book and print projects (Fogwell, Grishin, *et al*, 2005). When Fogwell left the school in 2006, the E+ABS reverted to PMD as the PMD Book Studio, which it remains today as a space for teaching single-semester book and typography electives (Agostino, 2009: 193-196).

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

I mention the demise of and the sequel to the GIW's activities because I was present for them. I was accepted into the GIW in 1995 after doggedly going to night classes to produce an art portfolio to satisfy entry requirements. Once there, I participated in collaborative projects and individual projects, book and non-book related. With *Psalms* (1996), we worked with Petr Herel, visiting artist Ulrike Sturm and US typographer

22 These numbers were cited in 2001, but there have been further donations of GIW work to the collection since that date.

Raphael Fodde, who had brought the text with him, set in both English and Hebrew type (CR_ 2001: 307 (16); GIWML_141). For *Pulp Fiction* (1997) we students cast parts of our own and each other's naked bodies in plaster, using paper pulp to form odd body parts that we then photographed in outdoor and studio settings, learning to develop the colour Cibachrome photographs ourselves (CR_2001: 340 (16); GIWML_220[23]). The end result of that eclectic semester was a folio of loose photos in the GIW archive and cast paper shards of myself that I carried around from house to house for years, drawing and reimagining them into other work.

When I was being cast in plaster in late 1996, I was in the early stages of an accidental pregnancy. I took time off from my degree to have my son Barnaby, and when I returned in 1999, the GIW had become Printmedia and Drawing (PMD), a new entity that was populated by an at times uneasy mix of Printmaking students and GIW students. The culture shifted quickly: I spent my Honours year (mid-2001 to mid-2002) working on a major artist book project – Shared Rooms (*IMAGE 10*, and 1.2:38-39) – and was advised that making a single book was risky, that it might not be seen as a serious enough enterprise for an entire year, something that the GIW environment would never have questioned.[24]

My enthusiasm for letterpress meant that I spent a lot of time in the Edition + Artist Book Studio (E+ABS) and was hired as a technical assistant by Fogwell as soon as I graduated. This meant that I continued to collaborate with visiting artists and writers, and students and staff of the broader school. Eventually I was offered the teaching of the PMD book elective, and I made a point of taking each class to the GIW archive to experience the wide range of artist books available within the collection. Every encounter makes me thankful for the time I spent in that environment and encourages me to continue thinking about collaboration, space, text, illustration and the possibilities of the book as a research space.

23 Sidebar: both the *Catalogue Raisonné* and the Menzies Collection list this project as 1997, but as I was absent in 1997 (see next paragraph), I think the project has been wrongly dated. It was undertaken in semester 2 of 1996).

24 I was confident of the heft of the project, and when faced with the complex and resolved object, the Honours assessment panel had no doubts either, granting me first class.

10 Caren Florance, *Shared Rooms: Poems by Anna Akhmatova with Translations by Natalie Staples and Imitations by Rosemary Dobson and David Campbell*, 2002
Letterpress and monoprints on Zerkall wove paper. Screenprinted acetate envelopes, perspex drawer in cloth-covered slipcase. Edition of 5. 620 x 315 x 32.

Photos: Brenton McGeachie

The new knowledge I have created in this project is the body of artwork presented in *Reading Spaces*, but new *understandings* lie within the studio practice itself. They lie within the constant deliberation on how to engage with the diverse practices of my collaborators and how to subvert and extend the traditional relationship of writer and publisher. They also lie within a continual interrogation of studio practice, specifically letterpress studio practice, reflecting on its contemporary possibilities in order to address those nagging, often tacit, mores that seem to be inherited with the equipment.

Graeme Sullivan writes of trying to articulate the back and forth flow of multiple ideas in visual arts practice without hooking them to one or two theories, suggesting that 'although conceptual borders help to define areas of interest, they are permeable barriers that allow ideas to flow back and forth', and such ideas can be 'viewed as components that are bound together as a braided set of connected strands, or teased apart as separate threads. (2005: 94). This large half-section is where I present my braided rope, and try to comb out the threads. They vary in thickness, and colour.

The coarse hemp core is a desire for *activity*, to counteract leaden fixity and tease out the movement in moveable type. It has an equally persistent companion called *materiality*, a commitment to the *thing* that doesn't negate the digital, but tries to collaborate with it. Most of the things made by my collaborators and I were books, so I will first tease out a strand of what is almost an obligatory element when working with the artist book: a working definition. Another obligatory inclusion is a review of similar activity, and I will be sweetly obliging in this, looking at crossovers between art and poetry, and other mediatory practices. Then I will tease out my literary preoccupations: translation, the open work, textual activity, close reading through 'deformance', and the social text, which will lead me to an exploration of collaboration: between people, and between the network of the studio and the practitioner. Finally, before moving on to the case studies of Section 2, I will pull forth thoughts on performance, private and public, that will continue later, in Section 3.

All of these threads hold theoretical concepts as if they were colour: they might have more pigment in one and less in another, and this is not unusual when one observes art theory as a field: there is no actual *art* theory, it is a mesh of philosophy, sociology, literary theory, psychology, and whatever other interesting ideas fit the mood. This exegesis is no different. The many ideas I have encountered through this project (and my practice historically) have been like an *Oblique Strategies* idea generator.[25] I tend to have material responses when I read or hear theoretical phrases, and when McGann

25 'Oblique strategies' was a set of cards to combat creative block, devised by musician Brian Eno and painter Peter Schmidt in 1974. They have been digitised here: http://stoney.sb.org/eno/oblique.html (accessed 04/09/2017).

says 'textually engaged', or Barthes says 'an activity of production', my fingertips twitch. I can feel the cool metal type, the smooth pressure of a bonefolder as it breaks paper fibres into a page fold.

BEING THE BOOK

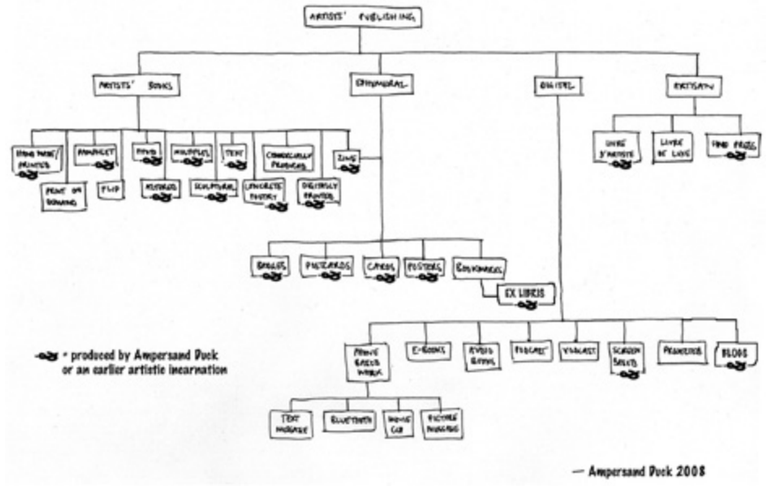
> *More than evoking a simpler technological past, the physical book promises a new experience – one that will unfold in your hands, page by page. Artists have long understood the potential of the book form to do more than just display information.*
>
> Zoe Sadokierski[26]

The swift transformation of the Western artist book from two polarised attitudes towards performing the codex (craft v conceptual) to a complex tangle of structures, themes, purposes and attitudes is an international phenomenon. It took a mere half-century in the northern hemisphere and half of that again in Australia. A self-driven need for collectors (institutional and otherwise) to make sense of the proliferation has resulted in innumerable attempts to neatly define the field and to categorise its activities.[27] Some are easier to distinguish than others: **fine press books**, ***livre d'artiste***, **art books**, **zines**, are all production-based entities, of various degrees of technical quality. Some artist books are easy to sift into groups based on graspable elements, like **altered books**, **photobooks**, **sculptural books**. When the boundaries begin to slide and definitions become conceptual, it is useful to think of artist books as Johanna Drucker does, as 'zones of activity', as a collection of 'elements and activities' (2004: 2) that create spaces by their intersections:

> Artists' books take every possible form, participate in every possible convention of book making, every possible 'ism' of mainstream art and literature, every possible mode of production, every shape, every degree of ephemerality or archival durability. There are no specific criteria for defining what an artist book is, but there are many criteria for defining what it is not, or what it partakes of, or what it distinguishes itself from. (2004: 14)

In *A Manifesto for the Book* (2010), the summary of their project 'What will be the canon for the artist's book in the 21st century', UK researchers Sarah Bodman and Tom Sowden had the aim of coining a definitive term for artistic publishing. They surveyed widely across artists around the world, using direct interviews and online call-outs that asked practitioners to respond to their 'ABTREE', a classification diagram (*IMAGE 11*).[28] Their results affably failed to find a definitive term, reinforcing the slipperiness of the

26 Sadokierski, Z. 2014. Printed Matter: Books as art objects. *The Conversation*: https://theconversation.com/printed-matter-books-as-art-objects-21791 (accessed 04/09/2017).
27 See Bright, 2005: 3-4; Klima, 1998: 21-40 (whose chapter synthesises the US debate, including a lengthy account of Clive Phillpot's campaign against non-codex book arts); and Perrée, 2002: 12, as just a few examples.
28 I responded to their call-out, customising the ABTREE according to my practice at the time (*IMAGE 11*), and was included as a case study (Bowman & Sowden, 2010: 146-148).



11 My customised 2008 ABTREE contribution to the Bodman & Sowdon research callout (2010): this flags the various activities I was undertaking at the time.

field, and prompting them to state that the *idea* is a primary element, to which process is secondary (9).[29] They also helpfully concluded that:

> if you can add *arts* to *book* it implies all works surrounding and related to the subject – 'art' adds an extension to the definition of a book. Instantly you can include: zines, multiples, livres de luxe, livres d'artiste, pamphlets, altered/reconfigured books, sculptural works, unique books, downloads, e-books, mobile-phone based books, blogs, Bluetooth, video, podcasts, performance, and any ephemera such as badges, stickers, postcards etc. Perhaps even liberature? It also allows for one-off works. (2010: 3).

This is probably the closest alignment to my approach to the artist book: that people use the labels that they are familiar with and the forms that they know. Questing, definition-defying books are made by people who don't know the rules or don't care, or are curious as to how much they can push the form. It isn't the actual objects that are experimental, it is the people making them. Freedom is taken, not given. Definitions follow behind.

As the field continues to grow and age, the archivists delve backwards to form trails, which solidify into a canon of historical development: points of time when someone – a printer, an artist, a poet – did something radical with page- or book-space that is now tracked as an influential moment for artist books. Three constant examples are William Blake, Stephane Mallarmé and Ed Ruscha[30] (each of whom also intersect with

29 This seems to be at the heart of the siloing of Australian creative books (see 9:iii): 'art book' makers privilege simplicity of design, a focus on technology (new and retro) and concept-based work, shunning 'artist books' for being too craft-based, too focused on unusual forms and 'handmade' processes. A small but vocal segment of fine press practitioners dismiss both art and artist book makers as not paying *enough* attention to process and form (by this they mean the codex form). In other countries such distinctions don't seem to be an issue, perhaps because their populations allow bigger communities and more overlap.
30 Drucker argues against Ruscha being such a focal point, saying that while he typifies a technological shift in what could be defined as an artist book, what he was actually trying to do with *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations* (1963) has precedents going back to the early 20th century (2004: 11). Nevertheless, he has solidified his place in the canon via the contemporary popularity of the photobook.

technological developments in print/printmaking history), but there are many others of use when exploring any particular sector of the now extremely broad field. What is interesting about Blake and Mallarmé is that they are nodal intersections with the canon of visual poetry, as examples of poets who took control of page-space for themselves.

William Blake (1757-1827) is claimed by book artists because he produced *complete* books, from content to physical production, and thanks to his trade training and printmaking inventiveness, he managed to bypass book production conventions (see Drucker, 2004: 23; Bright, 2005: 33-34; Oppen & Lyssiotis, 2011: 11, 15). For poetry studies he is a poet whose page materiality is hard to separate from his poetry without losing an essential critical component of the reading, something that flows through to concrete and shaped poetry (Perloff, 1997: np).

The radically poetic use of page space by Stephane Mallarmé (1842-98) folds together the enthusiasm of book artists, designers and poets alike. His unresolved project towards the performance of the ideal Book, *Le Livre*, released by his family after his death, caused major ripples, but it was the design of his poem *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira Le Hasard* (*A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish Chance*) (1897/1914), which transformed the philosophical space of the page. With it he transgresses the boundaries of the page **gutter** to treat the double page spread as a single unit, and his use of typography and scale to evoke movement and distance pushes the work beyond the mere concrete. When an illustrated deluxe volume of the poem was planned (but never realised), he insisted that the images (by Redon) have a 'shaded background, because "if the drawing is presented on a light background, as in this plate, it will duplicate the drawing of my text which is black and white"' (Arnar 2011: 204). This awareness and emphasis on textual performativity as image and his vision of page-space as a field of possibilities influenced generations of visual artists and poets through the 20th century, who credit him as their stepping stone to active page/book space.

INTERSECTING INTERESTS

> *The introduction of space into poetry (or rather of poetry into space) is an enormous event of literally incalculable consequences. One of these consequences is concrete and /or visual poetry. Its birth is not an extravagant event in the history of literature, but the natural, unavoidable development of the spatial reality gained by language since the moment writing was invented*
> Ulises Carrión[31]

There have been continual crossovers of poetry and art on the page since Mallarmé, usually manifested typographically, like with the Russian *Zaum* poets, or the Constructivists; the German and French Dadaists and surrealists and the intersections with small magazine publishing throughout Britain, Europe and the US; Brazilian concrete poetry and the text art of the 1950s and 1960s; and, most recently, conceptual poetry

31 Carrión, U. 1991 [1975]. The New Art of Making Books. *In:* Lyons, J. (ed.) *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*. NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press: 34.

with its harvesting of the internet and ties to conceptual art. It's often hard these days to distinguish between artists' books and some poetry publications. It is beyond the scope of this exegesis to list the notable artists and poets who play with text materially, and use the page and book as a playground, most of whom are covered by writers like Drucker (1996), Hubert (1988), Perloff (e.g., 1998), Perrée (2002), Sackner (1986), Dworkin (2003) and McGann (1993) and in print and digital anthologies such as Hill & Vassilakis (2012), Ubuweb (Beaulieu, Bentley & Johnston, 1996–17), Hoptman (2012) and Bergvall, Browne, Carmody & Place (2012).

A shortlist of international people who have particularly informed this project are Steve McCaffery (Canada), whose writings on bricolage, deformance and technological affect (1986, 1996, and 2000 (1992)) extend his extremely material book practice; Susan Howe, with her cut and paste poetry from the archives (McLane & Howe, 2012); Charles Bernstein for his own work and his observations on other poets' visual practices (1992, 1996); with McCaffery and various); Kyle Schlesinger, who writes about collaborative practice as a component of his own poetry and letterpress imprints (2015); Johanna Drucker's artist books, with their meta focus on bibliography and letterpress process (1996, 2012, 2013a & b); and Emily McVarish, a Drucker student, whose impeccable typography and architectural approach to page-space is fascinating (1995, 2012), along with her statement that a print studio is 'a microcosm whose laws can be tested and revised' where 'play is essential' (2014). So far these are all Americans; in the UK I turn to Ron King and his collaboratively innovative Circle Press (2012), the gently material poems of Simon Cutts (2013) and the graphic work of Ian Hamilton Finlay (Poynor, 2002: 37). In Germany there is the German collaborative team USUS (designer Ulrike Stoltz and artist Uta Schneider) who combine their respective skills seamlessly and work extensively with the artist book, using digital and analogue typography (2007).

In Australia, outside of the work of the GIW, there are a number of printers, poets and artists who foreground typographic resonance with poetry and poetic texts: for example, the Wayzgoose Press (Jarvis, 2007), who print-perform performance poetry amongst their other biblio/graphic activities (*IMAGE 12*); Jessica Wilkinson (2012, 2014) who has a style inspired by the practice of Susan Howe; Carmine Frascarelli (2016), who is inspired by Wilkinson; Dan Disney and John Warwicker, individually (Lea, 2013.3: 14-21 and 28-31) and collaboratively (Disney & Warwicker, 2016, *IMAGE 13*); James Stuart (2009: 226-233); Chris Edwards (Lea, 2013.3: 6-9); Patrick Jones (2008; also Stuart, 2009: 146-153); Peter O'Mara (2008); Alex Selenitsch (2015; Stuart, 2009: 22-28); Richard Tipping (Lea, 2013.3: 67); Ruark Lewis (Selenitsch, 2008: 86-89, *IMAGE 14*); Gwen Harrison and Sue Anderson (2011, *IMAGE 15*); Nicci Haynes (Florance, 2016a: 37) and Mountains Brown Press (Atherton & Day, 2015, *IMAGE 16*).

Of the above (certainly *not* a definitive list), only a few approach the kind of collaborative work I have been undertaking. While the Wayzgoose Press undeniably print as an exercise in close reading, experimenting with both page and book and working with original poetry, they also refuse the poet any input into their process once

the project is underway (Jarvis, 2007: 125). Sue Anderson, bookbinder and letterpress printer, collaborates visually with intaglio printmaker Gwen Harrison. They concentrate on Australian history, weaving found texts (literary, political, historical) and sometimes original texts by writers like Peter Lyssiotis, into original imagery to make extraordinary artist books (*IMAGE 15*).[32] Mountains Brown Press, who is Phil Day (ex-GIW), likes to collaborate with poets with his drawings embedding themselves through and around their cleanly typeset texts in a shared page-space, but it is usually a demarcated situation, with the images often performing a light disconnect with the content of the text; his recent experiment with poet Cassandra Atherton, *Sketch Notes 1, 2, 3*, was interesting because she hand-scribed her poetry backwards onto his printmaking plates and stones, injecting herself into his visual domain (2015a) (*IMAGE 16*). Disney and Warwicker's *Report from a Border* (2016, *IMAGE 13*) is perhaps the closest: poetry by Disney and design by Warwicker, a fabulous excursion into **bibliographic code**, carefully constrained in the use of font, scale and page-space to create narrative tension, place and voice. Published by lighttrap press (Angela Gardner and Kerry Kilner), it had a large-format limited edition with letterpressed covers (printed by Gardner in my studio), as well as a smaller version aimed at the broader poetry market.

I have, after years of experimenting, come to a point where working with poetry is an avenue of questioning, a process of close reading that opens up pathways to play. As a field, it shares the same contumacious quality of the artist book: there are many ways to operate within the rules inventively, but there are also plenty of opportunities to bend, stretch and break expectations if one is so inclined. Unfortunately, apart from efforts like the ones listed above, poetry is often used in artist books in quite prosaic ways.

The research I have done into the use of poetry by Australian book artists (as opposed to collaborating directly with poets) suggests that the writing itself is insufficiently credited as an equal creative component of the work.[33] Certain common characteristics of many artist books suggest that visual artists tend to find a poem to use as a starting point, a springboard for their imagery. Sequences or collections of poems are rarely used; artist books often feature one poem, with 'borrowed' lines or whole poems reproduced without acknowledging publishers or even the poets themselves. An interesting example is *The Cartomancer in Exile* by Joanne Wild (Tasmania: Lasting Impressions, 1999), where Emily Dickinson's poetry is affectively integrated with the artist's original text and images (*IMAGE 17*).[34] The poet is listed on the cover but there are no details of the source or earlier publication in the colophon. The integration is unusual: commonly artists might include the entire poem at the start or end of the

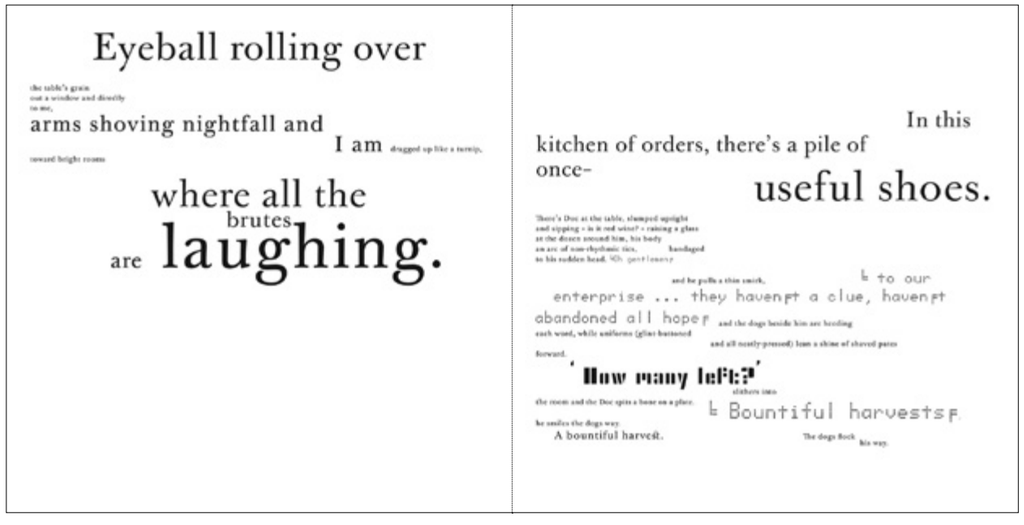
32 Sue and Gwen are difficult to cite; they have no press name, nor website. This BBC News clip gives a glimpse into their work: http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-australia-32429132/australian-pair-keep-book-making-alive (accessed 04/09/2017).

33 This research consists of viewing books in major institutional collections such as the State Libraries of Queensland and Victoria as well as exhibitions and private collections.

34 SLQ special collections reference ALAAB WIL, available upon request.

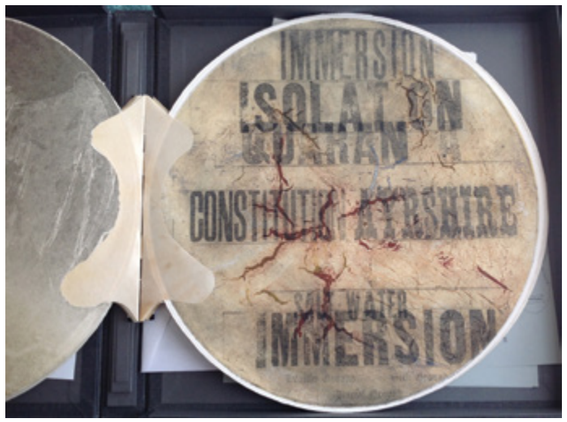
12 Wayzgoose Press
(Mike Hudson and Jadwiga Jarvis),
Dada Kamphen um Leben und Tod, 1997
Letterpress on paper, 340 x 500mm (folded), 8000mm long concertina.
Edition of 34.

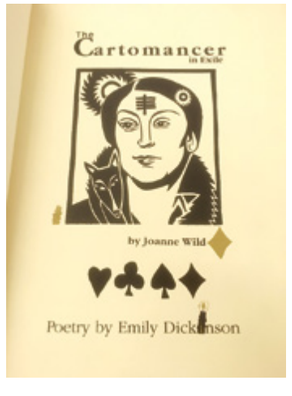
Photo: James Stuart



13 Dan Disney & John Warwicker,
Page spread from *Report from a Border*
(Maleny: lighttrap press, 2016).

Photo: Angela Gardner





Top to bottom

14 Ruark Lewis, *TH WA WI NEVE EN*, 1991. Letterpress and drawing on paper (letterpress by Nick Summers, Plumb Press, Sydney), 233 x 110 x 4mm, edn of 150.

Photo: National Library of Australia

15 Sue Anderson & Gwen Harrison, detail from *Quaranta Australis*, c.2011 (Sydney). Letterpress and intaglio on paper, bound in kangaroo vellum. 390 mm in 420 x 420 x 50 mm clamshell box. Variable edn of 4.

16 Phil Day and Cassandra Atherton, production detail from *Sketch Notes 2*, 2016 (Melbourne: Mountains Brown Press). Lithography stone, featuring CA's handwriting (albeit backwards to print a positive image) and PD's drawing.

Photo: Phil Day

17 Joanne Wild, *The Cartomancer*, 1999. (Tasmania: Lasting Impressions). Colour screenprinted pages, album binding. Edition of 15.

Collection of SLQ.

book, setting a context for the visual content, or they might break down the poem into its component parts, putting one line or stanza per page within or beside images. Another strategy is to use the poem's title as the book's title, and mention the connection in the book's colophon or accompanying exhibition statement. It is rare to find artist books that predominantly feature poetry in its own right as a creative medium unless they are directly addressing visual poetry or are made by people who are also poets or collaborating with poets. I have done all of these things, early in my career. I am listing them now because there seems to be a tacit perception that poetry provides a service to visual art, that it is a freely-obtainable resource, with no strings attached.

Distributing the lines of a poem across the pages of an artist book has a certain amount of logic when one compares the analogous nature of the two forms: an artist book tends not to be a collection of ideas, like an anthology; it is more often one concept, albeit with varying layers of complexity, sustained through book space. A poem does the same thing, compressed into page space.

Both have rhythms of movement, especially when the poem incorporates some degree of rhyme. Book artist Keith Smith made this connection and wrote about it as a tool for book structure in his 1984 *Structure of the Visual Book*. He mapped out the way meter works in poetic form, and applied it to artist's book design (65; 102-03: note on prosody). His rhythmic preoccupation is with the flow and interaction of text and image, discussed in terms of time and pacing.

In another book, *Text in the Book Format*, Smith also discusses the possibilities of interruption and disruption that can be exploited by using paratextual elements of the page's anatomy such as the gutter, or the fore-edge (2004: esp. 55-109). Such features echo similar poetic disruptive strategies like enjambment. It is these material commonalities, centring on the affordances of page and book, that offer endless potential for the artist, book, poet and poem.

BUILDING FROM BIBLIOGRAPHY

Past other things it began to flow… Anna Ahkmatova, translated by Natalie Staples[35]

After my brush with bibliography studies, Jerome McGann's writing resonated with me, particularly *The Textual Condition* (1991), and especially this:

> Properly understood, *this text*, every text, is unique and original to itself when we consider it not as an object but as an action. That is to say, *this* text is always a new (and changed) originality each time it is textually engaged (183).

He was writing about the text that he was composing for that particular book, in that moment of writing that I would eventually identify as Schön's *action-present* (1983: 62).[36]

35 From the literal translation of 'Northern Elegies III', from Florance, *Shared Rooms* (2002).

36 'A practitioner's reflection-in-action may not be very rapid. It is bounded by the "action-present," the zone of time in which action can still make a difference to the situation. The action-present may stretch

As I read, McGann took me to the concept of the *open work* as a 'field of possibilities' (Eco 1979: 48), and then grounded it in materiality by highlighting the importance of material bibliographic codes (paper, ink, typefaces, layouts (1991: 12) to the reception and interpretation of a text (1991: 85-87). His strong emphasis on 'socialised texts' encouraged the collaborative nature of my work: this locates the creation of meaning not just with the author, but with the processes that follow: editing, designing, illustrating, distribution, reception.

I started to quote McGann during my Visual Arts Honours year (2001/02), when I constructed an artist book from a small slice of the massive Russian translations project undertaken by Australian poets Rosemary Dobson and David Campbell in the 1970s. Spanning years, Campbell and Dobson would meet regularly with various Russian translators who would provide literal translations of Osip Mandelstam, Anna Akhmatova and other Russian poets. Dobson and Campbell would discuss the poems and then each write their own 'imitations' (their word), coming to the next meeting to discuss them and the next literal translation. Two commercially published but unsatisfactory outcomes came from their work: *Moscow Trefoil* (Campbell & Dobson, 1975) and *Seven Russian Poets* (*SRP*) (Dobson & Campbell, 1979). Unsatisfactory, because neither book provided all four versions of a poem: original, literal, 2 x imitations. *Moscow Trefoil* included all three English versions of a selection of poems, but in *SRP*, only one poem version is included, with the titles included in transliterated Russian. My own book, with its unwieldy but necessary title, *Shared Rooms: Poems by Anna Akhmatova with Translations by Natalie Staples and Imitations by Rosemary Dobson and David Campbell* (Florance, 2002, *IMAGE 10*), attempted not only to redress this shortcoming, but also to present the different versions of four Akhamatova poems in such a way as to allow the reader to rearrange the versions to their own liking, with each state (including the Cyrillic Russian) printed on separate pages and presented on a custom-made partitioned Perspex drawer to facilitate rearrangement.

I evoke this work here (and included it in my final exhibition) because it is, retrospectively, deeply connected to my core theoretical preoccupations: textual activity (Barthes/ McGann), collaboration (Schleifer/ Webb, *et al*), close reading via visual means (Samuels & McGann), translation/transcreation (de Campos), an investigation of graphic and bibliographic code in a poetic context (Drucker/ McGann), and the notion of private creative performance contrasting with the public spectacle of exhibiting (Stewart).

When I made *Shared Rooms*, I did not have a personal studio, but in the twenty years since, I have worked in both personal and shared studio spaces, and these experiences now inform my thinking about the *action-present* networkings of the studio as a form of performance, or specifically, with this kind of mediatory text-active work,

over minutes, hours, days, or even weeks or months, depending on the pace of activity and the situational boundaries that are characteristic of the practice.' (Schön, 1983: 62).

print-performance. This work is more a collaboration with the text rather than with the authors (Campbell had died by that point), but I had Dobson's full permission to use the poems and supporting archives, and we had conversations about the project that shaped the visual outcomes as it progressed. It was an early experiment with making the contents of the book more social, and I feel that the result embodies that concept of a socialised text, especially with its ongoing collaboration with its readers, who, every time it is shown, enthusiastically engage with the poetry. There remained with me, however, an urge to be more active in some way.

Active text

The Text is experienced only in an activity of production. Roland Barthes[37]

Poetry (with or without a collaborative relationship with the poet) has always been a core challenge for my practice over the years because of its visual density, its seemingly infinite possibilities for extended reading via a careful application of bibliographic code and material poetics.[38] It has also continually evoked the most interesting desire paths for play. Letterpress printing has a long relationship with poetry, and at various times since its invention it has actively influenced the visual development of poetic texts.[39] McGann says that 'Poetry is a language that calls attention to itself, that takes its own textual activities as its ground subject … poetical texts operate to display their own practices, to put them forward as the subject of attention (1991: 10-11). Part of what this indicates is that poets are already thinking – consciously or not – about the page when they 'design' the form or formlessness of their poems, giving clear signals to the publisher on how they do or don't want their poems to look.

Consequently, printed poetry is a solid example of textual concretisation, the fixity that is applied to text through publication, and particularly when published in an 'iconic' edition. In fact, the majority of poems have been visually concretised at the point of *composition*, before publication, when the poet determines their visual form. Form, even the 'free verse' form, is the most overt 'visual dimension' of a text, the first indicator of how the poet wants their words to be received, after which control of the bibliographic code transfers over to the publisher and their designer. George Bornstein says that *bibliographic code*:

> include[s] features of page layout, book design, ink and paper, and typeface as well as broader issues … like publisher, print run, price, or audience. … I would like to emphasize here … its congruence with Benjamin's notion of aura. The bibliographic

37 Barthes, R. 1977a (1971). From Work to Text. In: HEATH, S. (ed.) *Image – Music – Text*. London: Fontana Press: 157. I am flagging here a double reading of 'production': literal, material close reading, and that of reader reception, which is what Barthes is addressing.

38 By 'poetry' I am constraining myself to printed forms; this project does not include oral poetry other than some sound translations that were performed in the exhibition, prompted by the consequent score- and script-like nature of my visual work. Material poetics is discussed below, 1.2:44-46.

39 See Jean Jacobson's thesis, 'How should poetry look? The printer's measure and poet's line' (2008) which, as well as giving an historical overview, shows how the printer's measure still influences the look of poetry despite the contemporary 'freedom' of screen-space (whole quote in Section 2.2: 95).

> code corresponds to the aura and, like it, points to the work's 'presence in time and space.' (1999: 31)

Bibliographic code can also be conceived of as a kind of stagecraft of the page, an endless cycle of design invention and appropriation that time-stamps a work even if it is striving for timelessness (and which can be utilised to evoke a historical moment, as in my work with Melinda Smith).[40] Johanna Drucker, as I quoted earlier, calls bibliographic code 'a dynamic matrix of *poet*entialities' (2008a: np), a plethora of ways to create and provoke layers of meaning that demand or perhaps request graphic awareness.

Umberto Eco's discussion of the open work differentiates between the interpretations of reader and *performer*. He uses the example of music, describing a number of experimental music compositions where 'they are quite literally "unfinished": the author seems to hand them on to the performer more or less like components of its construction kit. He seems to be unconcerned about the manner of their eventual deployment.' (50). This is very similar to the way that Angela and I worked, whereas Melinda and I were much more formal, closer to his idea of performing a *work in movement* ('characterised by the invitation to *make the work* together with the author' (1979: 63)), which is not a matter of plucking solutions randomly out of chaos, but understanding that there is a given field of relations:

> The invitation offers the performer the chance of an oriented insertion into something which always remains the world intended by the author.
>
> In other words, the author offers the interpreter, the performer, the addressee a work *to be completed*. He does not know the exact fashion in which his work will be completed, but he is aware that once completed the working question will still be his own. It will not be a different work, and at the end of the interpretive dialogue, a form which is *his* form, will have been organised, even though it may have been assembled by an outside party in a particular way that he could not have foreseen. The author is the one who proposed a number of possibilities which had already been rationally organised, oriented, and endowed with specifications for proper development. (1979: 62)

With publishing, bibliographic code is the construction kit, and the performer is the designer (if they have any creative freedom in their job). Shifting the work's movement into the freedom of the artist book doesn't make the possibilities more chaotic, because the maker is still creatively contained by the concept of *book*.

From a designer's perspective, the convention seems to hold that while other forms of writing can be treated as *text*: moved between forms, appropriated and riffed upon, arranged and rearranged, alluded to and paraphrased visually (akin to music), it seems harder to do so with poetry because of the inherent fixity imbued by its compositional

40 What is 'timeless' for designers is generational, and fonts/page structure/process effects that seem old-fashioned for one decade eventually regain popularity for another, and the cycle repeats. The fonts that emerged in the late 1980s while computer screen resolution was being developed seem hopelessly daggy to me, but they are starting to re-emerge in design.

formality.[41] This is why interaction with poetry tends to be designerly, respectful and illustrative. The tacit rule seems to be only the poets themselves can be playful.

However, after years of working this way – reprinting fully-resolved poems, beautifully, with tenderness and respect – I wanted more playfulness. I was increasingly using letterpress as a printmaking technique rather than as a reproductive technique and wanted to try some live negotiations with poetic text. My own texts tending to be unsatisfactory (I am more comfortable creating visual *poetics*), it seemed better to connect my visual practice (my desires) with my design practice (the client's desires) and make it active and social. I didn't want to appropriate the poetry, or destroy the poet's careful intentions; I desired – desire, still – to 'draw … attention to that quality of self-embodiment that is so central to the nature of … texts' (McGann, 1991: 14) in a way that allows me to use letterpress as material slow reading, to use reading as a interpretive act and to allow the poets to experience other ways of 'poeting'.

COLLABORATIVE OPTIONS

> *More intrinsically grounded in collaborative creative processes are relationships between spontaneity and construction, or release of control; the place allowed to chance and indeterminacy; varied temporalities and densities of form; the relation to cultural spaces, or literally, to the working space. (the studio, the room…)* Anca Christofovici[42]

My research project was always going to be about collaboration (with humans) and negotiation (with equipment, situations and materials), forming a compositional network of meaning creation. The goal was to collaborate with poets who were (a) alive, (b) writing, and (c) open to making original texts together. Often when writers and artists collaborate for fine press, artist book or for poetry chapbooks, it is *ekphrastic*, a direct response to the other's often already resolved offering. My aim was to explore the options for something different, more intertwined, because ekphrasis seems to hold each other at arm's length, and then places the results side by side, in a text-image binary. Drucker's phrase, 'intertextual play', feels like a better fit for our work (2008a: np), especially in the context created by Webb and Hetherington:

> 'labouring together'—is at the heart of much of our practice. Importantly, this includes notions of intertextuality because all creative work, and every artist, depends in fundamental ways on what has been created by others before them—the creative work that surrounds and inculturates them even if they try to make a solitary way.
> (2016a: np (Introduction))

Australian visual artist Fiona Dempster, who regularly collaborates with another visual artist to make books, says 'Collaboration does not equal sub-contracting. For something to be a true collaboration, the focus needs to be much more on the doing

41 I.e., the decisions that poets make at the time of composition about form.

42 Anca Christofovici, 2015. Unfolding Possibilities: Artists books, cultural patterns, forms of experience. In: Cristofovici, A. & Montefalcone, B. (eds.) *The Art of Collaboration: Poets, Artists, Books,* Texas: Cuneiform Press: 18.

and deciding together, the trust and reciprocity that lie within asking somebody else to contribute to your work' (Dempster, 2014: np). Her phrase, 'asking somebody else to contribute', is the point at which I started with each poet, but as our projects progressed, it became obvious that we were each contributing to the other's creative practice.

Donna Lee Brien and Tess Brady's helpful taxonomy of collaboration (2003: np) lists a number of models, with the caveat that there is often movement between the forms because 'collaboration is neither a tidy nor a static form of creative practice', and 'fluidity is the key'. Reading through their list, it's clear that the various interactions within my project certainly have instances of slippage: there is predominantly 'contributor collaboration', when 'several artists contribute to a project in their separate ways, each maintaining their own signature, but producing a unified object, or achieving a common goal,' but there are also elements of 'secondary collaboration', 'when one person works on another person's writing/art, assisting in the refining and modification of it,' and 'conjunctive collaboration' (in the case of *Working Papers*) where Angela and I work sequentially.

To add to this sense of slippage, it feels important to state that the collaborations that I write about in the following chapters were not planned completely from the start, nor were their models carefully mapped out. I had some ideas about what I wanted to attempt, but what eventuated was built from the various collaborative interactions, which were all very different from each other because (and I cannot emphasise this clearly enough), my collaborators are all very different humans. Webb and Hetherington, looking at the difficulty of positioning creative practice as research, posit that while 'artists may work systematically, and although "conventional" research may depend as much on chance and moments of inspiration as on systematic processes, artist-researchers … are more likely to rely on emergence and chance than on systematic practices' (2016b: 16).

Emergence is certainly what my collaborators and I were/are open to. The human participation in this project demanded contingency and flexibility on both sides, so chance was used a lot, grabbing at opportunities as they arose, finding ways to work around changed plans (theirs and mine). Consequently, there were also a number of ideas and pitches that never eventuated: I wanted to do much more with Sarah Rice, but both our lives got very busy at the same time, and we could never find the right timings for connection. Also there were short-term opportunities that arose suddenly, like the 2016 *Tracer: You are here* project, where Owen Bullock and I had the chance to work with Louise Curham and explore our common interests in analogue/digital confluences.

People who, like me, work with others regularly as a producer of other people's meanings, often as service providers, may view collaboration differently from those for whom it is a rare event. Poet and letterpress printer Kyle Schlesinger (Cuneiform Press, US) quotes the Oxford English Dictionary, which calls it 'united labour' and lists collaborative qualities as 'interaction, participation, cooperation … call and response' (2015: 141), all things that are absent from jobbing work. Printmaker Trent Walter

(Negative Press, Australia) says that it is 'akin to holding up a mirror to the artist's intentions. It is almost like you are reflecting their concerns while adding to the dialogue with a range of techniques and conceptual clarifications' (Brook & Walter, 2013: 6).

My take on this is that I *am* reflecting my collaborators' concerns, through a participative call and response. We all came together with contributions of skill and experience: the poets came with their own wealth of creative knowledge, their process tool-kit, their own relationship with the page, and their own particular way with words. They also had expectations of publishing outcomes that I wanted to balance with my own desire for open-endedness. I brought a wealth of knowledge about print production, paper stock, bookbinding, how to convey voice through text-making tools, and a love of visual metaphor. Add to that mix my equipment: press and type, which were our construction kit; while not part of the human collaboration, the studio certainly had material input and imposed an affective constraint and generative effect on our ideas.

Part of that affective response is my material acknowledgement, through the slow labour of letterpress, of the time and labour required by writing itself. I know that while I go into my studio with its network of tools, type and machines, and undertake extensive negotiations between my creative responses and its ability to perform those desires, the poets that I am working with are having their own compositional negotiations with time, tools and their material processes. This time-sharing of skills is important for collaboration: Ron Schleifer takes from Walter Benjamin the idea of a 'temporal locus of shared work', that each member in a collaboration, no matter their status (technical worker or professor), experiences a time when their particular skills are essential for the successful outcome of the venture (2000: 114).

The collaborative emphasis has not only connected my practices to those of my working partners, but has also allowed me to tease out the differences and overlaps that I feel between my 'design thinking' and my 'art engagement'. The first observation (among many that will unfurl through these pages) is that each project idea pitched to a poet came from deep within the concerns of my creative practice, but the consideration that I put into the manifestation of that idea came from long experience as a designer, of observing and understanding the needs and proclivities of a client. Consequently, each body of collaborative work is quite different from the others, but the connecting element is my studio practice and its visual affordances. Thus, as will be unfolded, engaging with Angela's practice involved the deformative treatment of text via a disruption of type (see McGann & Samuels (2001) to construct new, variant readings, whereas Melinda and I engaged deeply with bibliographic code to construct visual narratives of re-voiced text.

Working together in these collaborative ways extends my earlier work on *Shared Rooms* (2002) (*IMAGE 10*, and 1.2:38-39). Campbell and Dobson called their rewriting of Ahkmatova *imitations*, but they were operating closer to *transcreation*; the way I re-presented their work certainly fits the concept.

Transcreation was defined by Brazilian concrete poet Haroldo de Campos in the 1950s as an ethical and political way to move ideas between languages (including visual language). He positioned the act of translation as *re-creation*, a making of something new from the original both as acknowledgement of the impossibility of complete accuracy (De Campos & Gibson (2007 [1963]: 25) and as resistance to a political reduction of the original work/language/culture (Bernstein, 2003: np).

In this current project, by paying close attention to the poet's own practice, I'm performing a material transcreation of their poetic preoccupations. The process is not a direct one of changing words to other words (although *Working Papers* disrupts its text to suggest new words); nor is it ekphrastic word to image, or image to word, as with many poet–artist interactions. It is a *transmission*: moving text from composition page-space (which is increasingly a virtual space) outwards to bibliographic page-space, to book-space, to *object*, creating a rich, thickening bibliographic code that not only showcases the text but shapes it, extends its possibilities, and suggests new, denser readings. It is design practice, but with added layers of artistic engagement. I've come to think that pure *design thinking*, for me at least, is a process of striving for clarity: unwrapping, unpacking, revealing purpose, aiding and enhancing use. Pure *art engagement* is the opposite action: wrapping, packing, creating opaqueness, building density, creating paradox and palimpsest. Both approaches value lateral thought and creativity, and they can (should) co-exist, intersecting by degrees, separate but inseparable. In this spectrum, translation could be seen as a design exercise, and transcreation an artistic undertaking, but again, each approach needs elements of the other to be a satisfying outcome.

THE (LETTERPRESS) STUDIO'S MATERIAL CONCERNS

> *All space is at once objective and subjective, physical and conceptual. It is, perhaps, the search for a productive exchange between these states that characterizes a studio.*
> Emily McVarish[43]

Not everything presented in *Reading Spaces* was produced using letterpress, but all of it was a result of working in and around a studio populated by textual production processes: presses, cabinets of type, manual typewriters, pens & ink, a computer and laserprinter. There is a stack of boxed paper stock, ranging from utilitarian bond through to thick, expensive handmade rag, and a stash of offcuts, overprints, and recycled materials. What gets used at any point of time depends upon the idea and the context, the particular poetics of the materials, the particular poetics of the poet's own practice (or my own, if it's a solo work).

The word *poetics*, Brian Reed explains, is morphing in the 21st century,

> continu[ing] its curious ambiguity, signifying, on the one hand, something institutional and perduring – a branch of literary criticism – and, on the other hand, something altogether more changeable, porous, and unpredictable, namely, the compositional principles the poets themselves discover and apply during the writing process. (2012: 1064)

43 Emily McVarish, 2014. The atmosphere of possibility, *Journal of Artists Books*: 16.

Charles Bernstein has long said that 'Poetics is the continuation of poetry by other means,' adding, 'Poetics makes explicit what is otherwise unexplicit and, perhaps more important, makes unexplicit what is otherwise explicit' (1992: 160-61).[44] Visual artists often work this way using *material poetics*, a siting of meaning within materiality and the particular openings that materials can offer. Writing and visual arts traditions offer different perspectives on what materiality means to its work and process, both of which inform the praxis of these projects' materiality – their poetics.

Some writers emphasise the materiality of the compositional environment. For example, poet Glyn Maxwell riffs on the black and the white of writing:

> remind yourself that the writing of a poem is a physical act, a deed that elbows into its space and time in the day or the night. The passing of the quill, the fountain pen, the typewriter, the iPad – this too shall pass – never changed anything. … Put the blank paper, or the empty screen, right to one side there, and start to know it. … Poets work with two materials, one's black, and one's white. Call them sound and silence, life and death, hot and cold, love and loss: any can be the case but none of those yins and yangs tell the whole story. What you feel the whiteness is right now – consciously or more likely some way beneath that plane – will determine what you do next. Call it this and that, whatever it is this time, just don't make the mistake of thinking the white sheet is nothing. It's nothing for your novelist, your journalist, your blogger. For those folk it's a *tabula rasa*, a giving surface. For a poet it's half of everything. (2012: 11)

Poet and theorist Astrid Lorange writes about poetry's 'sense of madeness' (2014: 36) and compiles ways that writers think about the materiality of writing in terms of *composition* ('the way writing is written'), *strangeness* (engaging with language as a stranger), *signifying* (phenomenal knowing), *affinitive acts* ('bringing things in contact with each other') and 'queering … major disruption through minor forms' such as typos, reproductive glitches and extra spaces (2014: 36-40), all of which could be (and are, in these projects) applied to the making of an artist book in collaboration as an artist with a writer.

Visual arts and craft disciplines – when they are resisting pure opticality – work with what Glenn Adamson calls 'direct engagement with specific material properties' (2007: 39), which means foregrounding the qualities that belong to that particular material: e.g., the heavy softness of lead; the fluidity of paint; the bite of acid; the clarity of glass. These elements can be explored/resisted/expanded on a purely physical level, but add an exploration of what associative meanings can be embedded in a material, then artists move closer to the way writers think.

Material poetics is two-pronged: it is performing Heidegger's 'thingness of the thing' (2001 [1971]: 164), and it is imbuing the thingness with one's own knowledge of

44 I find this last line a succinct evocation of my thoughts on art/design thinking.

its context and history to tease out new connections. Not only is the metal lead heavy, grey and soft: it lines caskets; prevents x-ray vision; forms printable letters; draws a line.

These contextual associations become building blocks, allowing the material/s to carry/project/represent the artists' desires in a way that (hopefully) offers further possibilities for the viewer/reader/audience to find their own message. They can be foregrounded and explicitly contextualised to invite specific connections, but as Eco points out, a degree of suggestiveness opens up the work to 'be performed with the full emotional and imaginative resources of the interpreter (1979: 53)'. Sculptor Terri Bird says 'the *work* of the work of art is the activity of its materiality that yields the disordering effects of matter' (2011:5). The conscious use of material poetics is a complex balance: if too subtle or too embedded, the meaning may never be unpacked without an accompanying exegesis. If too explicit, there is no room for discovery.

My time in the print studio is spent making material connections for the ideas that the poets and I generate. One example is *Pleasure Demolition* (2016), a poetry mobile that conflates two of a series of poems about architectural concerns by Angela Gardner. I'd used one poem, 'Demolition', years earlier in a collaborative piece with street artist Byrd: I printed chunks of the poem using whatever wood type I could find in the Otago University print room at the end of my Printer-in-Residence time, and used the brown-paper lunchbags I'd been given every day. Our installation, with the paper bags pasted to a wall and over-sprayed with various paint colours, was only *in situ* for a weekend before its own demolition, and the idea still had potential, so it stuck around (*IMAGE 18*). I revisited the series, called 'Notes to Architects',[45] and the poem just before 'Demolition' is called 'Pleasure Grounds', and it explores the general decadence of shopping malls:

> ...use the steps of an escalator as they topple at the brink.
> In some ways it is best to avoid the infinitive although you can
> be guided by available materials such as milksops and honey.[46]

I segmented both poems evenly and printed each corresponding chunk back to back on roughly torn (demolished) pieces of objects that had been trade props: brown paper shopping bags (the kind with handles), brown paper sacks (the thick ones that come with artisanal foodstuffs), the lovely stiff brown kraft that wraps parcels (ties up with string), and old postal packages. Strung up in a grid, the small bites of text revolve and generate new texts for the viewer (*IMAGE 19*). It would have been extremely hard to print the recycled scraps by other means thanks to their seams and irregularities.

Angela and I have worked together in the studio, taking turns setting and printing text, often for her projects as well as my PhD projects. She is a printmaker as well as a poet, so she is as interested as I am in exploring how we can engage with the material

45 This series is unpublished to date.
46 See Appendix 4: 219 for complete versions of both poems.

18 Byrd (Dan Maginnity) and Caren Florance, *Demolition*, 2010. Collaborative installation for Megalo's Print Big at the Fitters Workshop, August 2010. Letterpress on papers, various paints, mixed media.

19 Caren Florance, *Pleasure Demolition*, 2016. Letterpress on papers, string, pole. Poetry by Angela Gardner.

Photo: Brenton McGeachie

poetics of the letterpress process as well as its overt material possibilities. It is worth taking a moment here to step sideways to explore what I mean by this.

Currently there is a generational shift in letterpress practitioners as trade practice dies out, with new printers originating from the commercial design field, attracted by what they have seen on the internet or in design publications rather than emerging directly from the printing and publishing industries.[47] They are exploring ways to extend the physicality of letterpress in terms of matrix capacity, such as 3D printing and **cast relief plates**, both processes that allow the design to be digital, and the output to be analogue. So far, however, because the design practitioners are mostly interested in using letterpress to differentiate themselves in the commercial market, and because few art schools have the facilities or trained staff, there is little experimental letterpress printing taking place in Australia apart from the work of a few artists who, like me, approach it more from a printmaking perspective.[48]

The expectations for the process are also shifting with this generational movement. Until the cross-over to plate-based commercial printing processes in the 1980s, the desired page effect for **craft printers** was *invisibility*, a quiet but elegant presence on the page, with a shallow but distinct impression into a firm, matte paper stock.[49] Contemporary design use of letterpress has, from my observations, three preoccupations: texture (deep impression into thick paper stock), active colour (a colour-effecting overlay of inks), and visual noise (misregistration/glitch). Each are deliberate points of difference from the limitations of contemporary commercial digital printing, which is highly accurate to the point of perfection, but prints thousands of colours side by side (as opposed to overlaid) in one pass of the printer and can only print on the surface of extremely smooth machine-made paper. The future of neo-commercial, ie, design-driven letterpress will revolve around matrices that can be newly cut or cast, like wood type, 3D printing and photopolymer; lead type will become a rarity because of the difficulty in accessing casting facilities.[50]

David Jury, writing from a design perspective, says that the 'physical manifestation of its past is, perhaps, the single most important, and certainly the most profound

47 See Nicole Phillips' Australian *Typograph.journal* for interviews with designers who work with analogue processes such as letterpress and sign-writing. For example, issue 1 features British printers The Counter Press (2014: 70-79). Her website includes many other examples: http://www.typographher.com/typographjournal/ (accessed 04/09/2017).

48 I was commissioned to write about this for the State Library of Victoria (Florance, 2015: 63-75). Commercial output tends to be in the form of stationery (invitations, greeting cards, business cards) or art prints, which tend to be designed posters rather than experimental work.

49 Such paper was always more luxurious than common commercial stock, and had the touch equivalence of *umami* (delicious mouthfeel). To find the equivalent these days a craft printer generally has to buy printmaking paper, as those old paper lines have been discontinued by manufacturers as they are not compatible with contemporary digital printing processes.

50 There are no commercial foundries in the southern hemisphere, apart from one in NZ (The Printing Museum, Wellington) and a few blokes with monotype machines around Australia who go in and out of production regularly, such as Michael Isaaksen of the Melbourne Museum of Printing.

difference between letterpress and digital typography' (2011: 24).[51] However, he also says that 'there is no reason to continue with letterpress unless it is used to promote only the best workmanship, allied with the best possible design' (2011: 25). While visible ageing is certainly attractive in wood type, this emphasis on perfection across the field of design and fine press printing means that metal type is often discarded when showing signs of wear. I can see the merit in undertaking 'excellent' printing, but to privilege perfection when contemporary printing technology has made it ubiquitous seems retrograde, especially when it results in a wastage of resources.

Printing with handset letterpress is therefore, for the most part, an *arriére-garde* pursuit, but there are many ways in which its use can be re-connected to contemporary creative preoccupations: one is its printmaking motility, and another is the ways its affective markmaking and printerly effects can be used to perform concepts of time and labour.

If the use of letterpress is approached from the perspective of a printmaker, then there are many affordances offered by the process: the inks (soy, rubber, oil-based) can be printed onto most surfaces, whether glossy photograph, floppy textile, or thick, rough paper. It can be over- and under-printed with any other printing process. It can sit lightly on the surface or bite firmly to create texture, with or without ink. The type can be whole, or broken, or printed iteratively until the type wears from crisply new to thick and coarse. It can be cleanly or roughly inked, and even the densest colours retain a measure of transparency thanks to the ink's medium, so that layers can be built up, and broken down. All type was hand-inked and hand-printed until well into the Industrial Revolution, and the 'golden age of printing', the 'era of the hand-press' evoked by many fine printers, is in fact a time when the pages were alive and active because of the visual variations that hand-work imbues. These visual variations are the poetics of the process.

I feel that there is still room to explore how letterpress can extend text materially and visually. There are ways in which the wear and tear of the matrix can contribute to meaning-generation. It is all complementary to and able to augment digital processes. This is the historical moment where handset letterpress might survive if it can be conceptualised around its intensively material properties. Notions of time, labour, attention, mediation, constraint, disruption, deterioration, glitch, iteration, affect, embodiment and space can be explored by both the *doing* (experiential studio time) and the *done* (the resulting artefact).[52]

I persist with movable type as a printmaker (and as a designer) because its compositional activity remains with the hands rather than the keyboard. Barbara Bolt

51 This 'physical manifestation' is its material markers: the bite into the page, the effects of worn type, the scuffs and scratches on the surface of the wood type.

52 An obstacle to regional development is the lack of public-access letterpress space, although this is also the historical moment when that gap is being addressed: at the time of writing, I know of two non-institutional public access letterpress studios in Australia that are in final-stage planning, and I am making plans to eventually do the same for my own equipment.

talks about studio practice in terms of knowing through *handling* (via Heidegger's writings on *handability*[53]), and the *bringing-forth* that the studio allows (2004, np). Handling the words as they come together allows a slow reading that encourages a similar mental juggling to that of a writer. The studio and its equipment becomes, in Bolt's argument, an 'artist-tool matrix … no longer conceived of as a means to an end, but rather … co-responsible (along with other elements) for bringing forth something into appearance' (2004, np).

Collaborating with the studio to perform print

> *Diderot felt the knowledge possessed in the skilled hands of artisans was amongst the greatest riches of 18th-century France. In several entries [of his Encyclopédie (1751-72)] he laments the low status of the artisan, and condemns the elite as unproductive and useless. Images of hands, often disembodied, are found throughout the plates, as are images of tools and materials. The emphasis was clearly on the making: there are hundreds of images of process but almost none of finished products. The emphasis on process exposes belief in making as thinking…* Ken Botnick[54]

A letterpress studio is of course a *print-making* space, filled with heavy equipment that bring together raw textual elements. Mine is typical: it contains multiple cabinets of type (metal and wood); a selection of presses, large and small; rollers and ink; rubber stamps and a variety of typewriters; plus drawing, sewing and bookbinding tools. I've printed in it for ten years, but it is not a fixed entity: I have moved it twice in the last five years and at the time of writing am about to relocate it again. It is exhausting and expensive to move. Every time I do it, I wish that my practice was something that I could stash in a cupboard; the sheer physicality of the equipment is the most pressing imperative to use it regularly. The studio and my quite large library of books (mostly about printing and book-making) have made me realise that owning such weighty things presumes a stability of space and income, a steadfastness that is hard to achieve as a casual worker in a society that values change, impermanence, hot-desking, and short-term rental leases. I have decided to adapt: I am constructing a relatively mobile studio using a 40ft shipping container, which will have the feel of a ship's galley. It should be able to be moved as a single unit, which will hopefully ensure a longer future for it as a collection.

My 'multiple cabinets of type' hold, in fact, a limited range of typefaces, particularly in relation to the multitude available online. Some of them I deliberately chose from a catalogue and ordered from an American foundry (English Garamond and Gill), at a time when I had decided to have a 'house style' (a short-lived impulse), but the majority of fonts have come to me via happenstance, by virtue of their being what was available when I happened to have the money and time to find them. Often when letterpress machinery is bought, it is accompanied by whatever the seller wants to dispose of, which is often strange bits of equipment and odds and ends of type.

53 Bolt uses Heidegger's '*The Question Concerning Technology*' (1977) and *Being and Time* (1996).
54 Botnick, K. 2016. Making the Book to Discover the Subject. *The Blue Notebook,* 11, 35.

Over the years I have given away what I don't need, and the result is that I feel that my studio now contains *enough*. Enough to work with, enough to problem-solve any lack without wishing for more. Having worked within it for many years, even (*especially*, perhaps) in different locations, its familiarity has become a zone of creative constraint, a discrete system of knowledge, and a network of *distributed cognition*. N. Katharine Hayles writes of distributed cognition, of knowledge residing in the non-human as well as the human in 'posthuman work networks' (1999: 288-90); she is mostly discussing intelligent machines, but she brings the reader to a point of understanding (via Latour) that humans have long been part of negotiated systems with objects that have their own complex relations and knowledge.

> Bring your attention to bear on hard things, and see them become gentle, soft, or human. Turn your attention to humans, and see them become electric circuits, automatic gears, or softwares. We cannot even define precisely what makes some human and others technical, whereas we are able to document precisely their modifications and replacements, their rearrangements and their alliances, their delegations and representations (Latour, 2012 [1990]: 19). [55]

I become an active part of the studio system when I enter and negotiate with its possibilities and its insistences. By this last word, I mean that not everything works the way it should, all the time, and often it takes extra negotiation to get a satisfactory result (and sometimes the aberration gives a new, more interesting result).

Hayles, in trying to reposition the human more equitably with the complex natural systems that surround us (and the extraneous systems that are fast surrounding us), echoes Bolt's interpretation of Heidegger's writings on co-responsibility and artistic relationships:

> Heidegger's attribution of responsibility and indebtedness to the silver and to the chalice grants agency to both. In doing so, he opens the possibility for theorising a very different relation between humans, materials and tools in artistic practice. In this relationship, the work of art is the particular understanding that is realised though our concernful dealings with ideas, tools and materials of production. The work of art is not the artwork (Bolt, 2004 np).

Hayles' perspective reinforces my long-held stance against the term 'mastery' (1999: 287). Equipment and processes are never 'mastered'; rather, their use is a continual negotiation, no matter how long one has worked with them. I once watched Louise Curham, a 'Tracer' collaborator, fiercely concentrate on her projectors during our super8 projection performance. Later I admired her focus, and she replied that she'd been 'thinking like a projector'. That was an epiphany for me, as I realised that whenever I work with a printing press, I also try to think like the press, to approach the action as a negotiation with the peculiarities, abilities and contingencies of the moment. Negotiating a process for half an hour is very different to having encountered it for

55 This is not the Latour reference that Hayles cites, but it is a piece of Latour that I have been carrying around for the last few years.

years, but any craftsperson or artist can affirm that the material outcome can never wholly be taken for granted, that the space of making is always a conscious, negotiated space. This can be extended to the act of collaboration itself: learning to negotiate with the actions, desires and capacities of the other parties, whether human or otherwise.

Consequently, everything produced in this doctoral period is a result of being hyper-aware that these material processes involve negotiation. Drucker, who has spent years making letterpress books alongside her online career, happily grumbles:

> In my opinion, anyone who romanticizes printing hasn't done much of it. Every book becomes an intolerable task by the time it is finished. The exhausting labor of realization always outlives the initial infatuation. (2014: 3)

She also writes about 'invisible labour'[56] in 'The myth of the democratic multiple":

> The seamless product tends to render the workedness of the production invisible. Labor, after all, does not disappear in a so-called post-industrial society, but it is rendered invisible, made to seem a natural function of the appearance of a product, rather than being a thing in itself. (1998: 190)

I am very aware that the majority of people who encounter my work have absolutely no idea of the process and labour involved. Does it matter? The liberation and democratisation of production and time/labour-saving has been achieved for textual production via computers and digital printing in the same way that white-goods have ostensibly released women from housework. Labour is only visible when the work presents obvious markers of time. For example, artist eX de Medici has a scribed tally of marks next to her signature at the base of every large-scale gouache drawing, some of them counting up to the twenties. I assumed that each mark signified an hour, but each actually stood for an entire day. She uses the tally to calculate the price of the work, making a direct correlation between time and value. Interestingly, there are no less than five catalogue essays talking about various aspects of her work in *Cold Blooded* (2013) but none of them mention this foregrounding of labour. Perhaps they don't need to, as the very large drawings have obvious layers of intensively built-up small brushstrokes, which overtly perform the labour for the viewer.

I consciously perform labour as a disruption: I deliberately leave traces of my equipment's labour on the work to interrupt the notion of pristine presentation. These are overt in *Working Papers*: there are indentations, ink drags at the paper edges, plus the most obvious proof of time and use, which is the disintegration of the type itself, which presents, in no particular order, as crisp letters beside those that are completely worn and dulled, thanks to multiple overprintings.

56 I encountered another use of this term in a bibliographic context when attending the Rare Book Summer School mentioned in 9nii of my Introduction: 'invisible labour' is unacknowledged production; in book terms this is often the typesetters, or image block-cutters. This has become an issue in contemporary art, when an artist uses a craftsperson to perform skill without acknowledgement, such as marble cutters and textile weavers (an interesting read on this is Harrod, 2015: 154-155). See also 95n86.

With *1962 Be Spoken To*, I made the decision to hand-roll every single element, partially as a way of tying the **manicules** in the text conceptually to the book's labour, but also as a way to humanise the work, in the same way that Melinda revoices the humans in Hansard's institutional archive. At a conservative guess, there were over 60 separate texts to roll with ink, and I printed at least seven of each sheet to produce an edition of five. Hand-rolling is easy to get wrong: there are flaws and inconsistencies (what a type-designer would call a 'humanist' characteristic) and there are also the material after-effects of handling each sheet during its many passes around the press cylinder and over the press bed. These marks would be annoying to a reader who is an experienced printer, but to others, they are affective performers of process, and contribute to the work's reception.

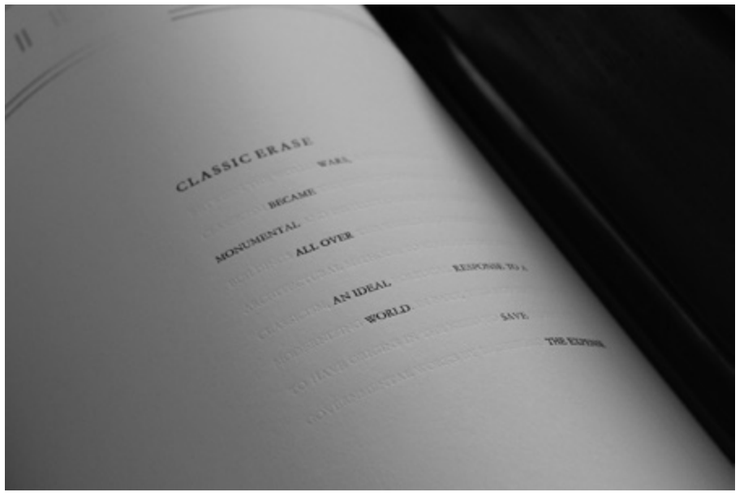
Because I'm not interested in thinking of the labour as an economic value added to my work,[57] I needed to personally rationalise the 'exhausting labor' of my practice from a different perspective, one that *sustains*, which for me is situated in the *experience of the doing*, from *within the time itself*, the action-present print-performance space. The value, for me, is the problem-solving, the puzzle-piecing, using a physical methodology: the limited choices within arms-reach.

> Letterpress provides a constant point of focus, running throughout the entire technical and cultural development of printing. … in the hands of a printer with the ability and inclination to overcome its rather complex, systematic working process, it could become a creative means of communication. Yet it is also a process seemingly full of constraints … : a severely limited choice of typefaces, italic in some sizes but not in others, little or no variation in weight, few sizes outside the standard text range, and a perennial issue of missing or damaged characters. The resources of each printing office were uniquely restricted, so the compositor, over many years of using and reusing the same letters, would become familiar with the quirky characteristics of each and every one of the larger-sized characters at his disposal. (Jury, 2012: 12)

Jury is talking there about an 18th-century print-shop, but in terms of a contemporary letterpress studio, it is very similar: each print studio in the world right now is 'uniquely restricted' by its own particular collection of resources. My own finite collection of physical and graphic resources determine the visual connections I can make with a text. Essentially, the studio is itself a creative constraint;[58] it is also a network of physical constraints: the size of the press bed, the effect of the temperature and climate on the inks and papers, the availability of inks: each pushes and pulls the work and decisions affecting the work as it is progress. Ideas that are suggested by the text are sometimes unsuccessful because of – or are progressed by – the physical affordances of the process.

57 I must say here that this does not mean I undersell myself; when the work is solid and sustained, it is priced accordingly. I do often make very cheap and cheerful letterpress work, sometimes as free stickers and paste-up posters.

58 The creative constraints that exist in the studio in turn inform my computer decisions; there are so many options in screenspace that keeping my design choices consistent with my studio facilities streamlines my work and enables a form of 'branding'.



20 Caren Florance and Melinda Smith, working detail of 'Stripped Classicism' from *1962: Be Spoken To*, photographed on the press, 2016.

For example, when Melinda gave me an erasure poem for our October page-spread about war, threat and espionage, she returned to our 'key text', a chunk from Wikipedia about 'Stripped Classicism'. She developed the poem, as the term 'erasure' suggests, by subtracting words from the original. Traditionally this would be done by crossing out text with a pencil or pen (or literally with an eraser), but Melinda worked with word processing software, using the text colour option to 'white out' the words: 'I kept a full copy up the top of the doc and experimented with different versions of the erasure underneath. Ctrl + Z is very handy when you want to retrace your erasing steps!' (PERS COMM, 3/3/17). My process was one of addition rather than subtraction: I set the entire text as a block, then inked up only the words that we wanted to highlight, blind embossing the remainder so that they are still present, legible when the paper is shifted to the light (*IMAGE 20*), allowing the reader to engage with the original in a way that is not possible in another printed format, such as the chapbook version.

Print-performance is a term I started using when writing for a printmaking conference with the provocative theme of 'post-print world'. My response was that print is not 'post', but instead is expanding to incorporate performance more explicitly. Excellence in printing output is traditionally the realm of skill and craftsmanship. Machine printing has made excellence ordinary, a quality so invisible to most users that the perceived proof of 'truthfulness' and value in printmaking – and other forms of visual art – has shifted to something else: a façade of amateurism, the use of casual affect, an exaggeration of mistake, a capturing of glitch. These affective strategies draw attention to materiality and process and are methods that perform (in terms of spectacle and showmanship), in a way that craft virtuosity used to.[59] This ties in with the way

59 Craft writer Glenn Adamson on contemporary 'sloppy craft': 'The lack of evident skill somehow implies the presence of concept. … On the one hand, skill commands respect. We value the integrity of the wellmade object, the time and care it demands. Therefore, what we most want out of our craft is something like perfection. On the other hand, though, we value craft's irregularity – its human, indeed

that letterpress is being performed by a new generation of practitioners, as mentioned earlier.[60] Many printmakers are moving away from template-style multiples based on ***bon-a-tier*** **proofs** in favour of more bespoke unique works, allowing the deviances of their process to perform difference in a quest to regain the aura that Benjamin argued away (2009 [1936]), to make their work more valuable as a commodity. *Print-performance* can be evoked when the material poetics of printing are foregrounded.

Performance is a word that tends to invoke the notion of *spectacle*; but my personal sense of print-performance, rooted in the poetics of the print studio, is completely un-spectacular: it is the *space* or *zone* of activity that draws upon the print resources around me, akin to Eco's 'construction kit' (1979: 50). In this sense, print-performance is a labour-intensive experiential and temporary/temporal process from which the resulting artifact is a souvenir that is subsequently distanced from the production by its entry into the consuming world.

Susan Stewart talks of spectacle as a *distancing of lived reality*, a separation of consumers from labour and the time of production (1993: 84-5). The unspectacular making space *is* engaged temporal reality. Everything is real and laborious in the studio: space is solid metal or wood. If I want a solid black area, I have to build it somehow, with a block or a roller. To change colour when printing, I have to clean five rollers on the press, or I need to hand-roll individual areas of the **forme**. If I want to reduce the text size by a few points, I need to re-set every single letter in a smaller font, and put all the larger letters away in their correct drawer. There is no click of the mouse to magic away the work. Yet, within the work, there is thinking time, time to mull over the words on the paper in front of me, words held in the hand.

The studio print-performance is a space of compositional activity. It is one in which on-going negotiations between self, materials and process take place. It is immersion in Schön's *action-present* (1983: 62): spending as much time as it takes, working into, around and through the text materially, but also contingently, as a close reading of the author's ideas. It is a space in which I've learned to embrace mistake and misprint as relevant, full of possibility, drawing forth affect. It is Heidegger's 'way of revealing' (1977: 12).

If we close our eyes and squint, *print-performance* can also encompass the compositional space in which the poets, the makers of the primary text, move their various drafts towards a 'print' outcome. (By 'print', in that latter situation, I mean 'publication', whether that is on paper or online; 'print' being the resolved stage after a 'scribed' manuscript.) Print-performance, then, for me and perhaps for the poets, is a *making/thinking* space, more fluid than a straight processual activity. When their compositional space and my messy compositional processes interact, the textual activity resembles Caroline Bergvall's positioning of performance writing:

humane, character. We want craft to stand in opposition to the slick and soulless products of systematised industrial production' (2008: 36-7).

60 See, for example, Sherraden, Horvath & Kingsbury, 2001: 138-143; Rivers, 2010: 56, 75, 159; and Jury, 2011: 127, 131.

> So where does the text start or end? In the case of a text for the page, does it start and end at the words? at the fonts? at the presentation lay-out? at the edges of the page? … One could take this further and say that practitioners which engage with a process of writing inevitably forward an intervention of language and of reading which destabilises and refocusses the processes of looking and/or of listening.
>
> Of course, we might start to wonder whether writing can function as a sound-effect or as a mark-making device. (1996: 5-6)

Print-performance is easily discerned in imagery produced from printmaking: variable plate-wiping of ink is an easy way to create mood. But textual print-performance via letterpress is a way of augmenting the dramatic usage of bibliographic code that could be thought of as *page performance*: a theatrical performance of typography to foreground meaning, which is much more 'spectacular'. The two need to be differentiated because page performance doesn't need to be connected to material production or its affect: witness the aforementioned Disney & Warwicker *Report from a Border* (2016), which is simply laserprinted and bound. Yet their pages are superbly performed on a number of levels, including subtle hat-tips to graphic design history. Page performance is the result of forensic reading and carefully applied design stagecraft, akin to theatrical processes:

> [a] script for theatre or cinema will include only rudimentary suggestions regarding its production. Instead of detailed descriptive prose the script writer uses subtext, action and symbolism to indicate a character's motives and emotions. Michael Holt describes the theatre designer's reading of a script as a forensic process in which they must identify significant settings, objects and costumes whether specified or implied: 'Some details are hidden in the text. They may be revealed only in the dialogue, when a character refers to them. Sometimes they are there solely by inference, not actually mentioned, but nonetheless needed for the dialogue to work in action. Great care is needed to identify these items and decide how important they are' (Hinchcliffe: 2011: np)

If you substitute ' a script' with 'a poem', this is a very similar process to reproducing text performatively for the page. Printer Clifford Burke plays out manuscripts in his head, trying 'to see it in type in my mind's eye, the way some people see the stage while reading a play' (1980: 55). For Drucker,

> The visual IS a performative dimension: it makes the text, makes meaning in its embodiment, as form/expression/enunciation. Ultimately it's not only that the visual/image/icon/event performs on the stage/theater arena of the page but that it makes/is made/be's/ becomes through the graphic and visual means. (1996: 108)

The use of page performance to bring out the voice of poetry has a long provenance, from Blake (who was also very much a print-performer) (McGann, 1993:24) and Mallarmé (Arnur, 2011) to the graphic poets of the early twentieth century (e.g., the Zaum movement: a wonderful overview of such movements is Sackner, 1986:60-77) and on to more contemporary artists like Johanna Drucker (e.g., 2013a) and Emily McVarish (e.g., 2005) with their graphic architecture and typographic performativity.

Sometimes the typography is very dramatic; a good example is any of the later works by the Australian Wayzgoose Press, who developed a way of page- *and* print-performing Australian experimental poetry within fine press parameters (Jarvis, 2007). Seeing the poem as a script, they use typography and illustration not to tease out subtext, but to produce a kind of hyper-script, to play out the text like narrative comic panels, giving the reader a visual ride through the words. They use printmaking effects for maximum affect, for example printing from scrunched-up clingwrap, or performing incredible feats of linocut registration. Physically too large to be hand-held (one of their concertina books, *Ocker*, is 9 metres long at full extension), each book is a theatrical stage, and the reader is player and audience both. It is spectacular work.

My particular ways of working with Angela and Melinda will be outlined in detail soon; these collaborative projects have been deliberately much looser than when I am working on a commissioned (production) job; decisions are made as the work unfolds, there is a rough skeleton of a plan, but it is capable of incorporating changes as necessary. There is room, as with an acting script, to improvise. I aim to mix print- and page-performance, immersing myself in the co-responsiveness of the studio but also in conversation with my collaborators. All of the concepts that I have unstrung for you here tangle about each other, vying for attention. There is much to learn, and always so much to do.

Garamond
where no actual commercial need
G18pt
12pt
Lie cries of facts,
so fact cries life.
Exchange messages
main
area
STAEDTLER
rasoplast

SECTION 2: COLLABORATIVE MATERIALITIES

2.1 COLLABORATING WITH THE BOOK

Toute Pensée émet un Coup de Dés — Mallarmé[61]

[Every Thought gives off a Dice Throw] (trans. A. Harley, 1965: 233)
[All Thought is a Roll of the Dice] (trans. R. Bononno & J. Clark, 2015: 22)

Let's make a book, I tell my students. I pick up a piece of paper. The starting point is the single sheet, which when isolated is a *leaf*. Once folded, we have a *folio*: the fold offers graphic and theoretical elements that can add multiple meanings to the text and its presentation. Gather the folios into *signatures*, and we start forming *books*.[62]

However, every stage of this process can be arrested and examined, each component can open itself up to the service of a creative idea, with the book performing as a research space. The page is somewhere to start. It can exist by itself as a single sheet, but if not connected by some sort of content to other sheets, it remains just a sheet of paper. Bibliographer Andrew Piper, has a taxonomy of the way pages can operate: as *windows*, allowing us to look through 'into an imaginative space'; *frames*, which 'not only allow us to look through, but also *at*, to see something that has been distilled … like microscopes, only in reverse'; *individuations*, because unlike scrolls, pages are finite: we cannot read both sides at once, and through them we can 'access the world at random out of sequence, as a piece'; *mirrors*, because as you turn the page, the opening that reveals is double: 'they comment, reflect, illustrate, or confound one another'; and lastly, pages are *folds*: they are 'not just a part, but always a part of' (2012: 515-17). When single sheets are bound together, the spine and gutter provides a prosthetic fold. Even a scrolled book, containing no sharp folds, when rolled can be thought of as folded up around itself. The material fold is, concurrently, place, space, time, echo, and motion:

> The problem is not how to finish a fold, but how to continue it, make it go through the roof, take it to infinity. (Deleuze & Strauss, 1991: 243)

CF: *The book is a place of becoming, a space of becoming, and it ends in being* book. *There is a design stage where I work out what I want the book to be, but there's always a space between the planning and becoming (or making) and if it's truly an artist book then there is room in that space for change… There is room in that space for thinking, feeling, doing, and the book that I come out with at the end might be totally different to the book I started with. Everything hinges upon the directions that the poets take me.*
(voice memo 16102015)

61 Two translations of Mallarmé with very different meanings. I prefer the 1965 wording, which acknowledges that every decision provokes another forking of decisions.

62 If one is making a codex; with a sheet in the hand, it can also be folded many times, curled, cut… the privileging of the codex is a privileging of Western culture. The move into other forms in the 1980s was not just a craft exploration of form, but initially a conscious act of cultural inclusion, with makers researching book development in other countries, particularly Asia (like the palm-leaf binding).

FOLDS

Deleuze and Strauss use the theoretical idea of the fold to connect many threads of concurrencies: philosophers, histories, stories, materials. That quote continues:

> For the fold affects not only all kinds of materials, which thus become matter of expression in accordance with different scales and speeds and vectors (the mountains and the waters, papers, fabrics, living tissues, the brain), but it also *determines and brings form into being and into appearance*, it makes of it form of expression, Gestaltung, genetic element or the line of infinite inflection, the curve of a single variable. (1991: 243, my emphasis)

Their broad musings on what a fold can be/do/represent has become central to art theory; in this project I am more interested in the physical, that material moment of *bringing form into being*, the process of working through what physical manipulation can do to/for text, for myself and for the poet.

In 2013 I worked with a poem by Sarah Rice called *The one who stopped*,[63] for a travelling exhibition celebrating the ready-made Chinese folded book.[64] It is a poem about a man crossing a road and looking at his watch, caught historically for mere seconds on celluloid film. I was thinking about the way that the very distinct folded panels of the concertina encouraged animated sequence, like film frames. I made three unique versions of the same book in order to test the use of a wax and dye batik process, to see if it would satisfactorily enact the disintegrating scratch and bubble of old film (*IMAGE 21*). I used Sarah's poem in a classic 'artist book' sense: creating a sense of movement and time across the span of the book, eking out the words from page/frame to page/frame and balancing the weight of words and visual effects. The poetry acts as breadcrumbs, guiding the reader into the visuality, creating concrete meaning for effects that otherwise seem abstract. The folds allow the reader to perform the 'minute deaths each millisecond', the 'stop' and 'look', 'giving us pause'.

I had a breakthrough with the material fold when working with a poem by Owen Bullock. We both attended the 2014 Codex Australia Symposium in Melbourne, after which he wrote a long poem called 'redex' that cobbled together snatches of conversations and presentations, bookended by his flight in and out of the city.[65] I wanted to produce a complex yet easily-printed piece for the US fine press journal *Parenthesis*, so I asked Owen if I could adapt an arrangement of his poem.[66] With his approval, I edited the poem down and removed all the quotes from named theorists and anything that really anchored it to that time and place, leaving it airy and universal, but retaining his arrival and departure. I printed an edition of it on both sides of a single page fold of thin translucent paper so that the words on either side interacted with each

63 The poem can be read in Appendix 4: 201.
64 Husted, *Open Books Plus*, 2014.
65 See Appendix 4: 205.
66 My version of *Redex* was printed for the deluxe folio accompanying *Parenthesis*, Autumn XXXIV.

21 Caren Florance, *The One Who Stopped*, 2013. Letterpress, wax, fabric dye on readymade Chinese folded book. Poem by Sarah Rice. 1 of 3 unique variations.

22 Caren Florance & Owen Bullock.Redex, 2014. Letterpress on Whitetrace. Edn of 160, 130 were for the *Parenthesis* 27 Deluxe Folio. 207 x 205, 4pp.

23 the 'white space' of Redex, locked in with the text (left) 2and unpacked, about to be distributed.

other and formed new, sometimes strange combinations (*IMAGE 22*). Bonnie Mak calls the page 'an interface, standing at the centre of the complicated dynamic of intention and reception; ... the material manifestation of an ongoing conversation between designer and reader,' (2011: 21) and this page fold format turned out to be just that. It demands to be physically handled, turned around and around to read. Like a conventional book, this work is impossible to display from one angle. It can't be framed or pinned like a flat printed sheet. It is hard to photograph. Like a book, it has narrative, and visual movement. I have come to regard this print as an artist book in its own right, and I have subsequently shown it in book exhibitions.

The page fold, and its consequent **gutter**, provides interesting spaces for text to negotiate, akin to the line breaks of poetry. Owen was entranced by both the new readings that my printing generated and also by the fact that this light, airy outcome was produced by a small mountain of lead blocks and wooden spacers (*IMAGE 23*). He wrote a series of subsequent iterations, each version quite different from each other. With 'On the final draft of Redex' (in *Tracer*, 2015), he uses exactly what he can see through the layers of paper when he holds it in his hands. (*IMAGE 24*).

The other book I made with Owen's poetry, *Tracer: you are here* (2016), is a print-performed souvenir of a shared collaborative performance experience. Owen and I were approached by Louise Curham, a fellow doctoral student who works with analogue projection methods and conceptual performance. She was interested in what we'd done on the page with Owen's poetry, and the way I was combining analogue and digital processes. Together we devised a print/projection/poetry performance for the 2016 You Are Here festival.[67] My main contribution (apart from actively participating in the group conversations) was performed alone, in the studio, hand-printing large-scale letterpress paper 'projection screens' using words we'd collated from our research interests and Owen's poetic preoccupations. On the festival night, Louise's hand-manipulated Super8 film tappeted through the projectors. The flickering images spilled over Owen, dressed in white overalls and roaming the space, reciting responsive haiku, and through all the movements my white, silver and translucent white printed words opened and closed, picked up and shadowed back. I was a technical assistant during the performance, watching for projector glitches, smoothing the 'screens' as the strong

67 Festival statement: "Tracer is a live performance of material poetics, hinging on memory and poetic experience. It's a collaboration between a filmmaker, a letterpress artist and a poet. Super 8 film, letterpress texts on giant pages and voice intersect and relate to suggest juxtapositions of the city and the humans who inhabit it." See http://youareherecanberra.com.au/accessibility/accessible-format-program/ (accessed 04/09/2017).

On the final arrange | ment of 'Redex'

Redex
Caren

the plane
glyph

bumbling backwards
bottling upwards
blocking howlwards

over the city
to biobirocebirou

sirallion

where I said I'd go

a royal, regal raygal

translating ieyal

yes,
try to make an effort
try to relax

I'm in their hands
I accept their unknown language
won't attempt to translate
aileron, victory

to be able to do it
yourself

I turn the page
the only thing I want
to read
is the date
upside front

it passed me
rebex

I had the chance to play
the balalaika restrung
FDA

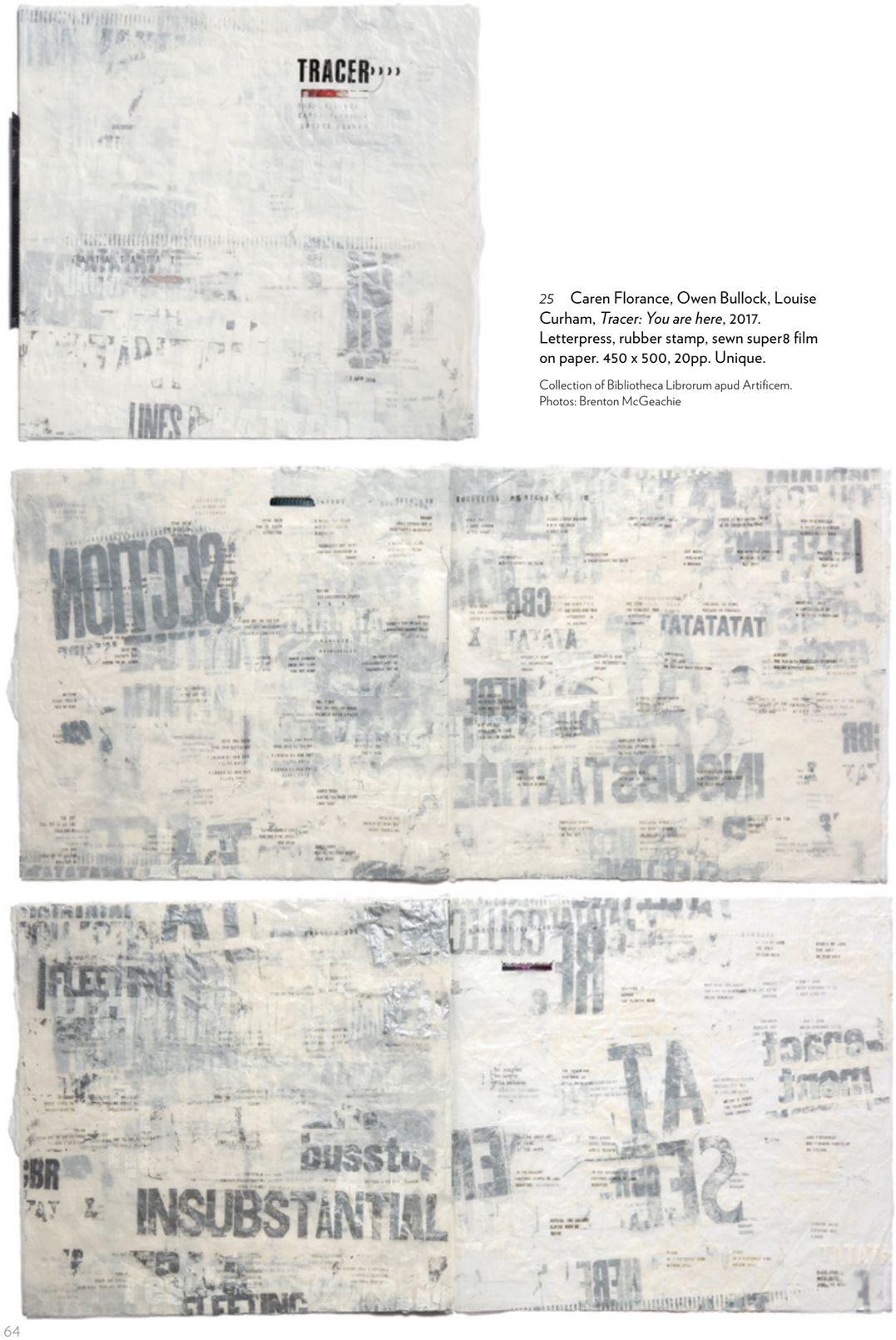
so I sing *Yon is elf*
flexion pointing
that way

a bucket in his hands
his able hands
upturned

and I in consciousness
turn his sunset flight
to order
the writing on the window
going the other way
(I'm remembering the train
and what it brought me to death)

this must be for him
even the duck

24 Owen Bullock, 'On the final draft of Redex', from *Tracer, 2015*.
Laserprinted, handsewn. 280 x 100 x 4. 36pp. Canberra: Ampersand Duck.
Digital typesetting: Caren Florance. *The dashed line is a simulated centre pagefold.*



25 Caren Florance, Owen Bullock, Louise Curham, *Tracer: You are here*, 2017. Letterpress, rubber stamp, sewn super8 film on paper. 450 x 500, 20pp. Unique.

Collection of Bibliotheca Librorum apud Artificem.
Photos: Brenton McGeachie

breeze moved them, and occasionally hand-rolling a piece of type and pressing it onto Owen and the paper.

The book that emerged from that experience is ostensibly simple: a large square single-folded signature, held together with a basic pamphlet stitch (*IMAGE 25*). Again, it uses translucent paper, this time something more like a thick glassine, a glossy sheet with a light, crackling strength as it moves. It had been a test piece for our projection performance, but rejected because the printed words were too dominant (it was gabbling: I made the following sheets breathe, with less text, more space and quieter tones). When the paper was torn down into pieces, the large letters (printed by rubbing the paper onto the surface of the inked wood type with my hands) run through the pages disjointedly, blanketing under, over and through the page folds, while the 50-odd haikus that Owen had performed through the projected films are roughly laid out consecutively like a script, printed while sitting at my kitchen table using what I think of as 'domestic letterpress': moveable rubber address stamps, painstakingly set up to print once, occasionally twice,[68] then dismantled to set up the next poem. Shards of Super8 film are hand-stitched on the pages, which re-enact in small bursts the primary colours that flashed through the films. This work is folding the experience of performing into its stage props; the background words and the foreground poems present two layers of textual print performance, obvious to the reader but *palpable* only to myself and my fellow performers.

WINDOWS

The next work I did with Sarah Rice was my first attempt at performing a poet's compositional space; it was intended to be a printed book but after a few attempts I felt that it needed to actually move, to perform what I was thinking as I worked through what she was doing, to provide a 'window… into [her] imaginative space' (Piper: 2012: 515) using the *idea* of pages.

Sarah gave me one of her writing notebooks to read in order to let me work with one of her finished poems from its most nascent moment to its published state. Trawling back and forth through the pages, I found a number of drafts of a poem called 'Vitreous Syneresis' and followed them backwards, eventually finding the one little jot, made during a museum visit, sitting aside from notes for another poem, that seemed to be its very first written appearance.[69] Bibliography inspired me here: tracking the progress of text from its manuscript stages through its variant states to a typescript and then to its fair copy is standard procedure for a scholarly editor, and I have worked with such tracings many times in my earlier incarnation as an academic typesetter.

Vitreous syneresis is an eye condition in which the clarity of the vitreous humor is altered and produces the symptom of eye floaters: black spots that swim and flash in the periphery of vision. They appear, often causing distress and confusion, and then

68 When Owen performs haiku, he often repeats a poem, as is haiku convention.
69 The collated manuscript of her notebook is in Appendix 4: 201-204.

26 Caren Florance & Sarah Rice,
Vitreous Syneresis (I see you sometimes), 2014.
Eight manipulated digital prints on archival rag paper, digital animation on iPad.
200 x 300. Edition of 10.

The grid on lower right is a simulated install with the 8 photographs set around the iPad. The five surrounding images are screengrabs from the animation.

either disappear or linger, depending on various factors. Often the sufferer can learn to ignore them, in the way that we only notice the feeling of our clothes on our body if we let ourselves think about it. Sarah's poem (and practice) draws upon Merleau-Ponty's ideas on the body as a primary site of experience (2012 [1962]). It explores the traces of relationships as they fade from one's life, and the sense individuals often have that a memory is following them, haunting them, when in fact it is the individual, the self, carrying the trace of experience and emotion through time and place.

What I learned about Sarah's writing process from her notebook is that she embraces her unconscious as a vital part of her writing practice. Her early drafts are messy, scrawled, fluid, exploratory, and in terms of handwriting, very fast yet hesitant and light, with the pen-tip hardly touching the page. Words move down, across, around, become text and paratext, afterthought and marginalia. Some words are completely illegible, others are uncertain of themselves, and could be read in a few different ways. As her ideas firm up, and as she switches from generator to editor, her handwriting correspondingly tightens, slows, resolves itself into a neat legible printed hand. Then there is a leap to the computer, after which changes are not tracked.

I started with letterpress but moved from it across to my computer, which resulted in a body of work that I think of as 'drawings towards a book': an iPad animation and a set of eight iPad-sized digital prints depicting images derived from photographs of the letterpress process. I called it *Vitreous Syneresis: I see you sometimes* (*IMAGE 26*). The work can be arranged in a variety of ways: as a grid, a line or a cluster. The animation is short but with a lot of visual information, so it loops continually and a reader will notice something different each time it repeats. The states that move through the animation are sorted into grades of 'acceptance': the text in Roman font is the final poem; italics means that it didn't make it to the final cut, or was corrected somehow, and there are whole sections using Sarah's own handwriting, moving amongst the more authoritative sections of 'print' typeface.

I found Sarah's transition from scrawl to print fascinating: the visual hesitancy, how she was probing outwards from her innermost thoughts with her pen tip. I wanted to recreate that sense of moving almost blindly through a mental space, using the pen as a cane, so I used a combination of black and white space in the animation. I reversed the printed page to become white text on black matrix. Later, when I interviewed Sarah's response to the work, she shed light on my own thoughts with a revelation:

> I often write in the dark at night, so I keep my book under my pillow… If I wake up in the middle of the night and I have an idea, I don't necessarily turn the light on, so I find things on backs of envelopes and the writing will be over the top of [itself] and going everywhere, so it's really difficult to read later. … somehow it keeps the meaning from being too fastened to the page … (Rice 2015)

That insight about 'being too fastened to the page' is a direct result of watching my animation. Sarah had never paid attention to the materiality of her creative process before she saw this work: how her handwriting starts with unconfident scrawl and gets

neater as she firms up her ideas. Her first response was one of wonder and vulnerability, but she quickly accepted the work as a revelation, and the resulting heightened consciousness has come through in her subsequent poetry.

Using time and motion digitally was not a shortcut: it is as painstaking as setting each letter individually in lead. That slowness allowed me the same space as letterpress setting to think about the words. Time-demanding processes such as these build up a sense of potency, a space filled with potentialities, the trace of the absence of presence, the retinal persistence of words.[70]

DIFFERENT MATERIALITIES

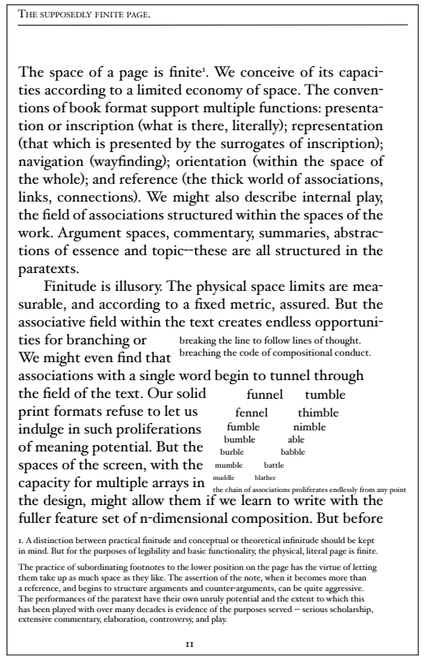
The respective structures of my two 'major' artist book works with Melinda and Angela gradually unfolded as our conversations built up ideas. By the time I got to the making stage, I had physically encountered books by Johanna Drucker and Emily McVarish that helped to shape my thoughts about using the same process in very different ways.

Besides being a graphic designer, bibliographer and information technology scholar, Drucker has a book practice that uses text, often letterpressed, to interrogate graphic space and the bibliographic code of the page. In 2013 she made two works available digitally: *Diagrammatic Writing* (2013a) (*IMAGE 27*) and *Stochastic Poetry* (2013b) (*IMAGE 28*). The latter is a scanned letterpressed artist book, with 'loose' unruly swirls of text breaking out of the lineated grid that type demands to occupy. It is a stunning feat of active printing: hours of setting, shifting, tweaking and overprinting that are probably only apparent to those familiar with the process, and thus a good example of a print-performed souvenir, an artefact now distanced from Drucker's experience of making, 'saturated with meanings that will never be fully revealed to us' (Stewart, 1993: 133), open to acts of our own interpretation. I have only seen this work via a downloadable PDF, which lacks any material traces of her labour.

Diagrammatic Writing is a computer-designed book, playfully interrogating the meta workings of the page through 'The semantic system of graphical relations/The graphical expression of semantic relations.' Page one is the single line: 'The first words placed define the space.' It is set slightly to the left side, and about a third of the way down the page. Since it is not centred both ways, the inference is that the page has an architecture, and probably one that utilizes the classical golden ratio, where extra space is proportionally allotted to the outer and bottom margins. When a 'plinth' of text develops further along (3) to 'support' that line, it shifts between full **justified** and left justified as it qualifies itself.

> Every decision has an effect on every other. Ragged right breathes differently than justified text. Strict disciplines attend to the habits imposed by quadrature. We expect to see lines aligned, in accord with the longstanding decorum of print. These lines behave slightly

70 This section on Rice and 'Vitreous Syneresis' is a shortened version of Florance, 2015b.


THE SUPPOSEDLY FINITE PAGE.

The space of a page is finite[1]. We conceive of its capacities according to a limited economy of space. The conventions of book format support multiple functions: presentation or inscription (what is there, literally); representation (that which is presented by the surrogates of inscription); navigation (wayfinding); orientation (within the space of the whole); and reference (the thick world of associations, links, connections). We might also describe internal play, the field of associations structured within the spaces of the work. Argument spaces, commentary, summaries, abstractions of essence and topic—these are all structured in the paratexts.

Finitude is illusory. The physical space limits are measurable, and according to a fixed metric, assured. But the associative field within the text creates endless opportunities for branching or breaking the line to follow lines of thought. breaching the code of compositional conduct. We might even find that associations with a single word begin to tunnel through the field of the text. Our solid print formats refuse to let us indulge in such proliferations of meaning potential. But the spaces of the screen, with the capacity for multiple arrays in the design, might allow them if we learn to write with the fuller feature set of n-dimensional composition. But before

funnel tumble
fennel thimble
fumble nimble
bumble able
burble babble
mumble battle
muddle blather
the chain of associations proliferates endlessly from any point

1. A distinction between practical finitude and conceptual or theoretical infinitude should be kept in mind. But for the purposes of legibility and basic functionality, the physical, literal page is finite.

The practice of subordinating footnotes to the lower position on the page has the virtue of letting them take up as much space as they like. The assertion of the note, when it becomes more than a reference, and begins to structure arguments and counter-arguments, can be quite aggressive. The performances of the paratext have their own unruly potential and the extent to which this has been played with over many decades is evidence of the purposes served – serious scholarship, extensive commentary, elaboration, controversy, and play.

11

Clockwise from top left:

27 Johanna Drucker, page detail from *Diagrammatic Writing* (2013a).
Artist book. Digital, laser-printed pamphlet.
US, Ubu Editions.

28 Johanna Drucker, page detail from *Stochastic Poetry* (2013b).
Letterpress on paper, paper jacket, sewn.
US: Ubu Editions/ Horn Press.

29 Johanna Drucker, page detail from *The History of the/my Wor(l)d* (1990).
Letterpress on paper, two sections sewn into paper jacket. Harvard University: Druckwerk.

> differently than those in the paragraph above. No judgement or value attaches to these differences. They simply register and have an effect. (3)

As we progress, watching lines move in and out of the page, letting us know at each point exactly what they intend by it, other elements appear. A header announced itself: 'A HEADER INFLECTS THE TEXT BLOCK EVEN THOUGH IT IS IN A SUBSIDIARY ROLE' (7). Columns form and disintegrate (8-9). Pauses announce their alertness to possibility, and sentences start to shift scale, format and intensity, all the time reciting their roles like children in a pageant. There is a page about entanglement (17) that sparked a lightbulb in my head about how to work with Angela's key texts. I bought a copy of the book, a simple laser-printed publication which slipped out of the envelope as if it were a piece of junk mail.

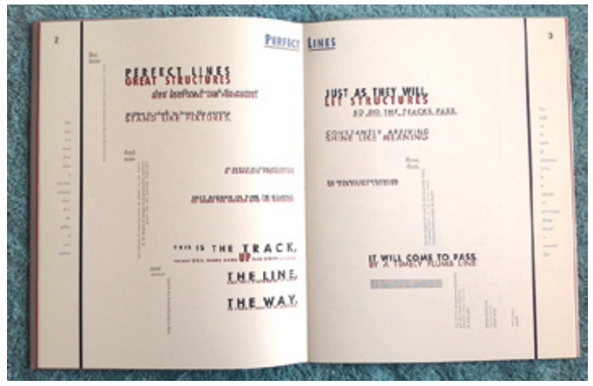
A third, more material encounter with a Drucker book was during a trip to the US in (their) summer of 2015. I visited the San Francisco Library on a spare afternoon and requested to see a number of Drucker's works. One, *The History of the/my Wor(l)d* (1990) (*image 29*), I had seen many times on websites and in books about artist books, with its red and black letterpressed typographical pages, structured spaces and integration of found blocks, cuts and caps. I made notes to myself as I turned the pages, and this was the observation that stayed with me:

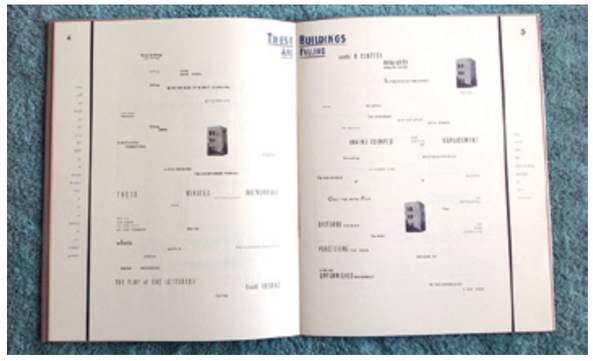
> *The text is quite dry. Not always printed well – sometimes the type is not firmly on its feet. Little touches of humour. The flaws are interesting. This is a mid-edition copy, and there are imperfections that I would apologise for. Maybe I should stop apologising.*
>
> (personal notebook, 09072015)

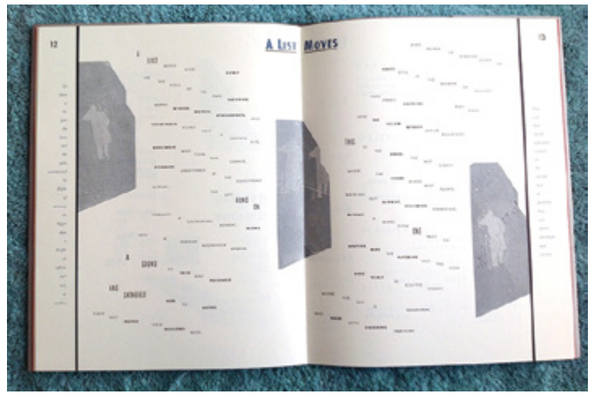
Drucker has always been an inspiration to me, and this touch of human imperfection, so rarely conveyed in photographic documentation, started a chain of thought that wasn't about allowing myself to print in a worse way, but instead about embracing imperfection and glitch as a way of emphasizing the meatspace[71] behind the process, and as a commitment to the real circumstances of operating a dusty, inky studio full of type that wears down as it is printed with no local avenue to renew or recast it.

Emily McVarish is another US artist, an ex-student of Drucker's, and also a notable graphic designer and letterpress printer. My host in San Francisco had a copy of McVarish's book *Wards of Obsolescence* (1995) that I could handle (*IMAGE 30*). For McVarish, the book is a city, a conglomeration of carved-out urban spaces. She approaches the page spread like a town planner or architect; every opening in *Wards* is intricately designed for an visual story, with the poetic text patterned out with subtle varieties of typographic emphasis and scale. She constructs a fenestrating framework for the book that uses a solid black stripe to demarcate a central text-/image-busy 'public' space from a thin outer strip that contains a soft blue italic serifed text written in an enigmatic second-person narrative. Subtitled '8 Texts with Margin Notes', this is an

71 A charming term coined by the cyberpunk movement for the space of real-life human activity, alongside 'wetware' for the brain and its real-time workings.







30 Emily McVarish,
pagespreads from *Wards of Obsolescence*, 1995.
Letterpress on paper, softbound. San Francisco.

early work in McVarish's career. Her approach to the textual page is heavily influenced by Drucker's work, but she works a lot with photopolymer plate rather than handset type, which makes a clean sheen of perfection much more achievable. Reading this book planted a seed in my mind about setting up an architectural framework, theoretical and physical, for the nascent book that Melinda and I had affectionately given the working title of 'Ghost Bags'.

PAGESPACE

> *Now it's now it's now there is only now not then I'm writing now and this is what writing now can glean...* (Studio notebook, December 2015)

Most of the small works that I have done during this project have explored the poetics of the processes I use. One that didn't make it into the exhibition was called *Transference* (2014). It was an iteration of *Interference* (*IMAGE 37*), my translation experiment with Angela. I took the various poem states that we'd created and typed them up on a number of typewriters, a different machine for each 'voice' (iPhone, Nokia, original poem). I used **carbon paper** and a thin, yellow architectural trace paper, so that there were two copies of each typing: the original and the transferred carbon. Because the paper was so thin, often the rounded counters of the letters would punch out. I folded the typed sheets into two books, equally distributing the originals and copies, and made a little manilla card slipcover for each, then posted one to Angela, which she promptly lost. I tried a few things with mine: I photographed it against windows, and lit from behind by an old lightbox. The latter gave the most effect of words trapped in amber (*IMAGE 31*).

The punched holes interested me; they were beautiful holes, allowing a literal showthrough as the page turned, but they were not so much apertures as punctures, cut through by a violent machine action. They didn't happen every time (unless one consciously used force); they were analogue glitches. They started a train of thought about space: I did some research into binary languages and discovered the numerical combination for the space between words (00100000); I squinted my eyes at the various textblocks I was setting (I was/am doing a lot of poetry layout for the university's International Poetry Studies Institute) and thought about the space inside the margins; and I thought about the temporal space between maker and reader, two people occupying the same physical space at different times.

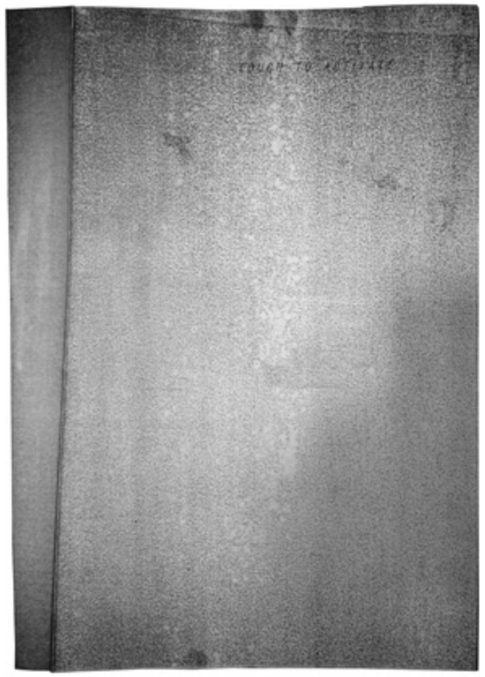
Each of these thoughts became a book, and each book was a kind of feeling-through without ultimate resolution. The first was *Touch to Activate* (2015), an editioned letterpress piece produced in one day for a staff workshop. The format is a single sheet of glossy paper folded into three to make a trifold booklet (*IMAGE 32*). Before it was printed, each sheet had been run through the press rollers (a process I use to clean the rollers to remove excess ink before using solvents) and consequently each is an

31 Caren Florance, Angela Gardner (etc), detail from *Transference*, 2014. Typed Yellowtrace. 130 x 110 x 2mm. 2 copies.

NOW. This is now. It's now now now not then now not then I'm setting lead now is then now I'm leading me slow now making now then there is only now my fingers then now you soon now here I'm here now then you there now you won now there I am leading here leading you here now only now this is no one won now you will be then I set the lead you follow now no one now.

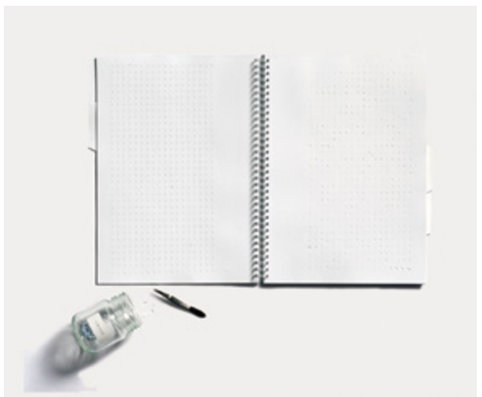
32 *(right)* Caren Florance, front panel of *Touch to Activate*, 2015. Artist book. Letterpress on gloss stock. 300 x 200, 6pp. Variable edn of 15.

(left) text from *Touch to Activate*



33 Caren Florance, detail from *Touch 00100000*, 2016. Typed bond paper, coil binding, jar, tweezers. 297 x 215x 20. Unique

Collection of Bibliotheca Librorum apud Artificem. Photo: Brenton McGeachie



individual, with various amounts of ink distributed unevenly and occasionally creasing and damage of paper.

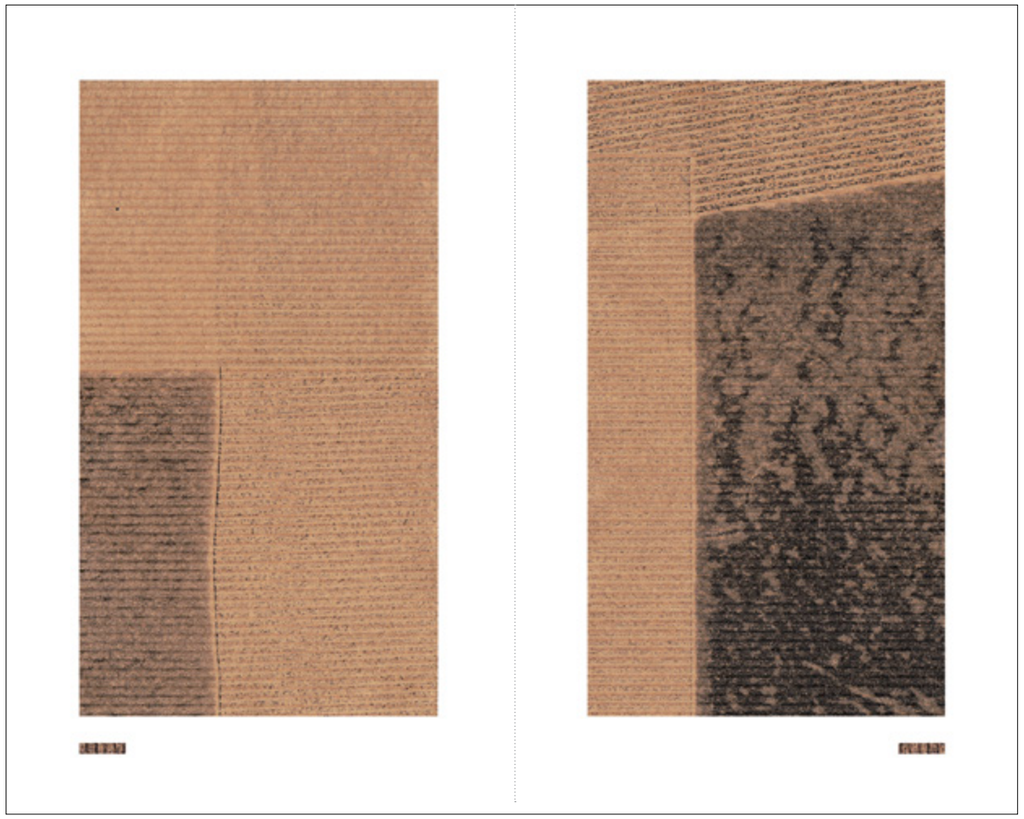
The text was not pre-composed, but had been an idea running through my head for a few weeks beforehand. The idea was to somehow pay attention to the philosophical gap between the person making the work and the person receiving the work. Often my role is as a mediator between the two: there is a writer, there is layout and production, and then there is the reader. This time I was the author. It was a spontaneous utterance: as I held the **setting stick**, faced the type drawer, and reached in to pick up letters, I let my thoughts drive my fingers. The first part of the text – *now now it's now not then now* – set the pace of the rest. The line breaks are determined by the length of the first line, locked in to be the width of the setting stick. There are puns about lead and leading, because I wanted to find words that suited my strange rant but also reflected the letterpress process I was using.[72]

The trifold has the title on the first panel: TOUCH TO ACTIVATE, and the hand turns it open to the left. The thick, uneven coating of black ink gives the glossy paper a palpable density, invoking the hiss and crackle of a screen, the blackness of hyperspace. The stream of consciousness is there on the second panel, on the right. When that is open, there is a full spread of glitch and disruption, and the (colophon) line:

> Handset and printed by Caren Florance 2015
> Read by you now We share this space

This notion of sharing space and the puncture of space between author and reader manifested in another work: *Touch 00100000* (2016). This time I picked the typewriter that seemed to have the sharpest cut and spent hours typing nothing but grids of zeroes into pages of white typewriter bond (*IMAGE 33*). I punched into two or three pages at a time, which gave varying degrees of puncture and cut, with many of the centres – the counters – ready to fall out, or needing a helping push. I kept the format simple: it was like a conventional unpublished manuscript, caught together with a coil binding and white typed card covers. I displayed the book with a pair of tweezers and a small jar, to collect the counters as they escaped or were pulled out (*IMAGE 12*). The point was to encourage the reader to intervene in the pages, to 'damage' the pages without fear, and in the process, to think about the movement from one side of the page to the other, about the process I'd used, about their contribution, and the connection it gave us both. At the first showing in the 2016 Material Poetics exhibition at ANCA Gallery, one teenage girl sat with the tweezers for a long time, collecting counters. 'This is better than colouring in,' she said.[73]

72 I realized afterward that while I was trying to address an unknown recipient, it also unconsciously drew from a particularly emotional discussion I'd just had with my recent ex-partner about my 'contribution' to our marriage. So I was addressing a reader but, if I have to be honest, I was also addressing him.
73 At the time of writing, colouring-in books are the latest recreational fad.



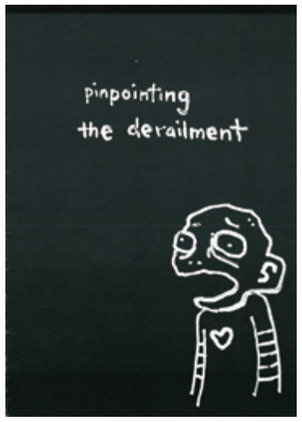
34 Caren Florance, pagespread from *Proseity*, 2015/17. Artist book. 203 x 127 x 5. Print-on-Demand process, via Ingram Sparke.

The third book was even more conventional in form: *Proseity* (2015/2017[74]) was my first attempt at print-on-demand (POD) publishing (*IMAGE 34*). Again, I wanted to use the press-cleaning sheets, but these were brown paper sheets, the striated kind, so that while the ink had coated the sheet, it had also picked up in darker and lighter stripes. There were moments where the paper had caught and creased, which caused interesting effects. It looked like some kind of layout grid for text, and the ink texture itself evoked asemic writing. Using the original prints was too direct; I wanted to give them a remove, to see if distancing the surface from its overt materiality provided a fresh reading. I cropped the sheets into 'textblocks' and scanned them, arranging and rearranging until I came up with a series of paired images, or pagespreads. The biggest disappointment (and I experienced this again with Angela's *The Future, Unimagine*:

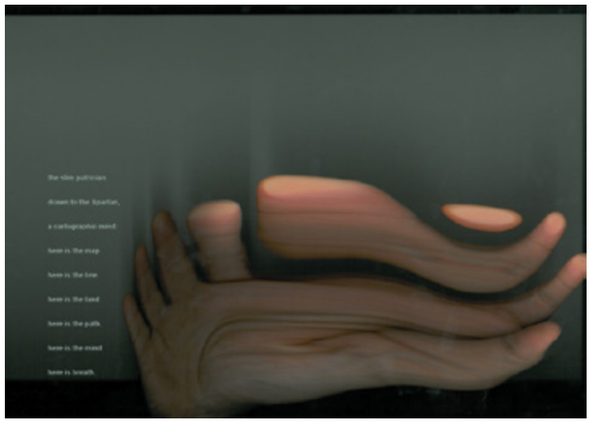
74 I was not happy with the initial version (mainly because of the provider) and made substantive changes to the second version, including the removal of the word 'Poems' from the title.

ORIGINAL: CAREN FLORANCE

SHANE STRANGE

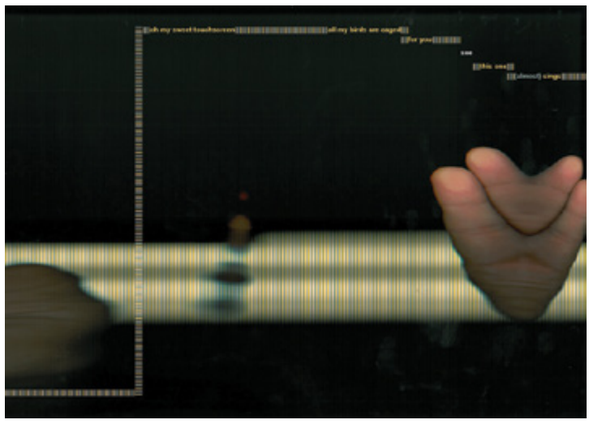


SHAGS

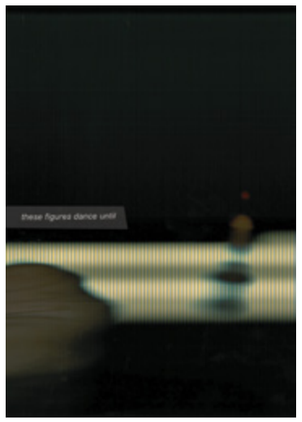


OWEN BULLOCK

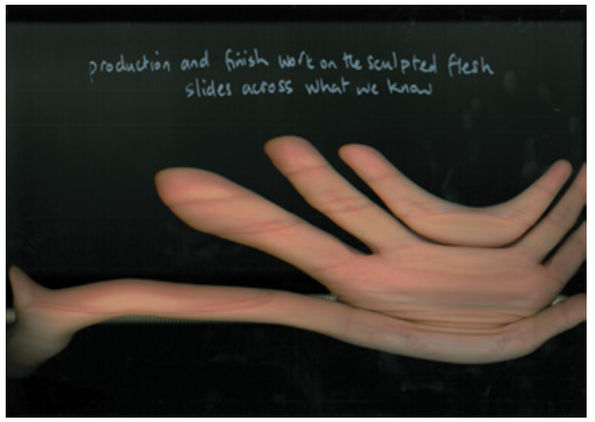
PAUL MUNDEN



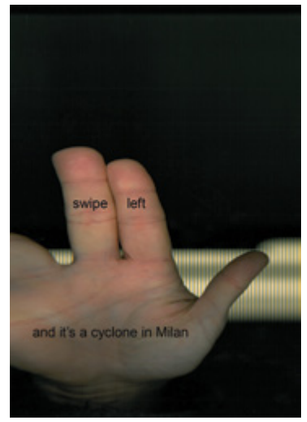
PHILIP GROSS



JACQUI MALINS

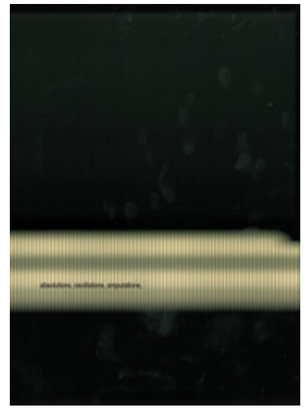


ANGELA GARDNER

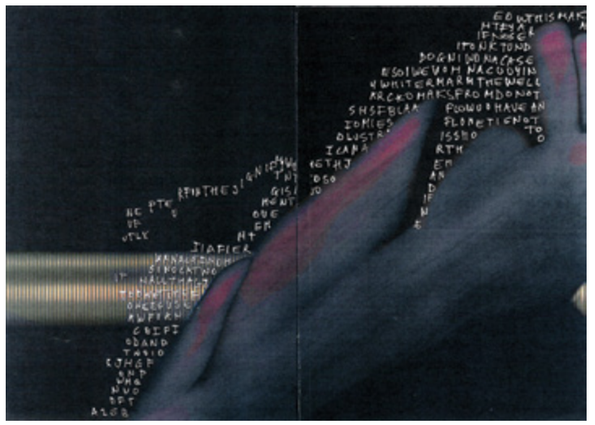


JEN WEBB

TANIA DE ROZARIO



MELINDA SMITH



NICCI HAYNES

MONICA CARROLL

35 Caren Florance, Owen Bullock, Monica Carroll, Tania de Rozario, Angela Gardner, Philip Gross, Nicci Haynes, Jacqui Malins, Paul Munden, Shags, Melinda Smith, Shane Strange, Jen Webb.
Hand-sewn zine. c.199 x 140. 16pp. Colour photocopy, digital files.

pp.99-102) was the physical intervention in the design of the book forced by the POD provider, so that I couldn't control the last few pages of the book. Despite this, I liked the sense of *trompe l'oeil* achieved through the pages; it is difficult to guess the origins of the images.

And then there is *Swipe*, a project I started about halfway through my doctorate, when I was scanning some book pages and seeing the tips of my fingers appear in the output, pushing the pages down onto the glass. Like many bored office workers, I used to photocopy parts of my body, and the copies came in very handy as a visual arts undergraduate. Decades later, photocopiers can scan, and email, and connect. I began starting the scanner and moving my fingers along the glass in various ways, following the laser-light, reaching into it and away, gesturing and sliding. The result was organic and fleshy, the body in the machine, with striations of light and smooth green underwater colours. I made a zine from it, and invited poets and artists to connect with it textually (*IMAGE 35*). Some responded directly onto the pages (Gardner, Haynes, Shags, Webb), others sent me a script to typeset and I let myself react to various things: a form that the poet had used (Munden, writing for each page in triplets, which made boat-like shapes floating through the green, Malins, who cut and pasted her words on rough scraps of paper but wanted them to be smoothed out); or the tone of their voice/s (Smith, Carroll, Bullock, Strange); or their connection to technology (Gross, de Rozario). The poets focus on the hand/body, or the machine, or the now-familiar act of swiping a mobile device. At the time of adding my corrections to this chapter, I received a package from German artist Ulrike Stoltz, half of USUS, who made multiple responses, one of them being a completely analogue re-drawing of each page of the zine.

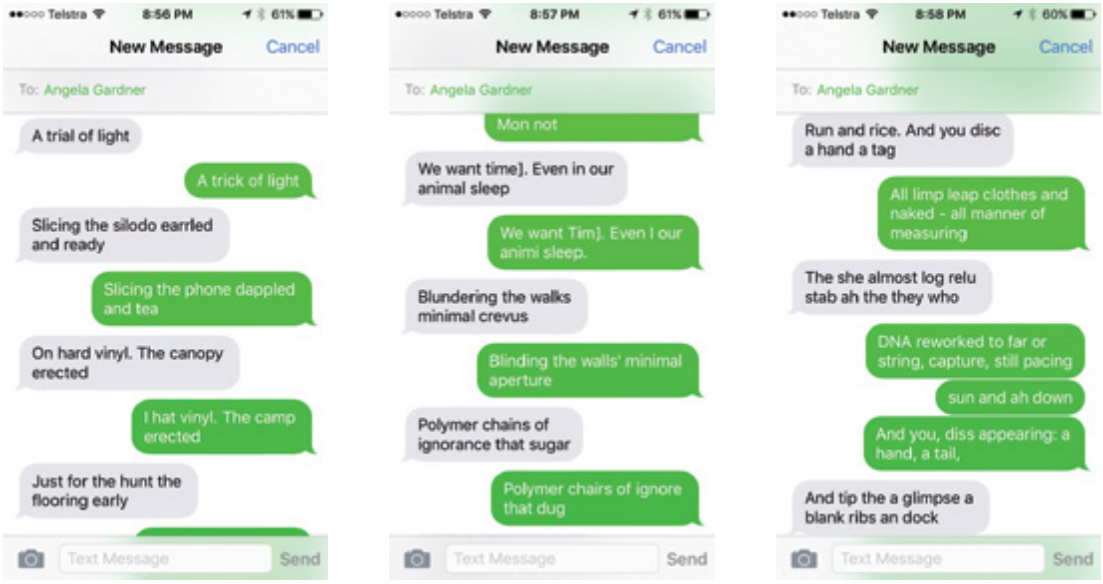
Each poet, in return, gets a PDF copy for digital use and a bundle of hard copies. The project is ongoing, but slowing down: it is contingent upon my access to the one particular institutional machine that prints the copies *just so*. The project will retreat from hard copy as the machine becomes inaccessible: I intend to make an online iteration of them, where the viewer can click between the versions, and perhaps mix and match like a sequential exquisite corpse. Swipe is about interaction and connection, yet there is a separateness, a pane of glass between text and image, the poet and myself, that seems to illustrate the exact space between writer, page and page production that I wanted to at least crack with my major collaborations.

SCALE

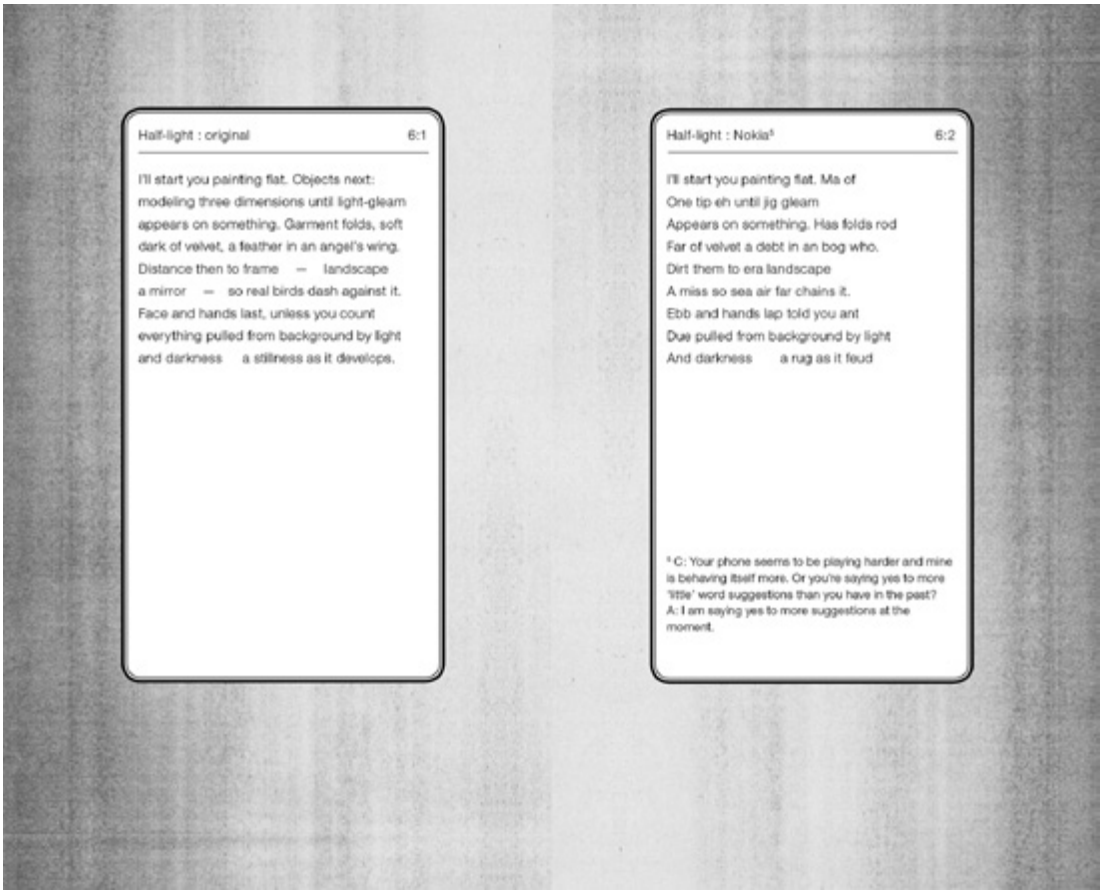
Each of the two major collaborative books is relatively large-format, thanks to a serendipitous moment when I bought a large newspaper-reading table that seemed to give me the nod as to scale. Scale is problematic: to be accessible as a reading object, the book needs to exist within human scale. Scale is sometimes an easy way to make creative work look important, 'a parade of values', says Stewart, that separates materiality from the body (1993: 86). Having a support that was purpose-built for large-scale reading encouraged me to work with pages to fit the support.[75]

I really wanted the folded page to be central to each collaboration. Each respective book form has its material complexities: *Working Papers* is complicated to physically negotiate, with its soft, floppy, unbound, uncut folded sheets that seem chaotic and are easily disordered. *1962: Be Spoken To* is a better behaved codex: a neatly-stitched block of crisp, cream Italian mould-made rag paper sheets without a cover, with a separately-stitched title/colophon section. Both sections of *1962: BST* slip into their custom-made Tyvek 'ghost-bag', as if the book were already a museum object. There are distinct conceptual reasons why each book is materially constructed so, and they will be teased out over the next two subsections.

75 See Section 3: 149 and *IMAGE 96*.



36 iPhone screen-grabs of poetry texts between Angela and I, 2014. Green is me, grey is Angela, texting from her old Nokia. We exchanged lines from her resolved poems, accepting autocorrect suggestions.



37 Angela Gardner (etc), pagespread from *Interference*, 2014. Handsewn chapbook, 210 x 130, 24pp.

2.2 UNFOLDING TO REFOLD: COLLABORATIVE WORDING WITH ANGELA GARDNER

> *...the Text is experienced only in an activity of production.* Roland Barthes[76]

> *Thus far I have mostly been examining the phenomenon of 'wild glitches,' but my observations are equally applicable to 'domesticated glitches,' because both glitches ultimately and finally 'run' not on computers, but on human wetware in real-time. Both glitches are experienced by humans as a spike or a surplus of affect.* Curt Cloninger[77]

Working Papers is where I gave myself full permission to stop making sense, or at least to allow myself a freedom that is only enabled by a surrender to process and its serendipities. I'd practiced with a chapzine called *Interference* (2014), when Angela Gardner and I embarked upon an experiment to see how much textual disruption we could tolerate. Quite a lot, actually, but we did ease into it. We texted each other a number of her poems and accepted what our respective auto-corrects suggested (*IMAGE 36*). It wasn't until about three-quarters of the way through, after a number of poems, that I realized that we'd both been curating the suggestions offered, choosing the more substantial words that looked more interesting. Suddenly Angela started sending back chopped syllables, and the translations started looking positively Joycean. The chapzine presents all three states of the poems: *original*, *iPhone* and *Nokia*, in no particular order (*IMAGE 37*); it also has the author on the cover as 'Angela Gardner, etc.' and lists all the equipment involved on the colophon page, inspired by a bit of reading about Actor-Network Theory.[78]

With our major project I wanted to fully engage with glitch, discovery and disrupted page-space.[79] I wanted to foreground the strange moments that happen when printing text by hand, to see how much of it I could deliberately generate while remaining creatively open to the possibilities of *composition* and *distribution*, terms used by both

76 Barthes, R. 1977 [1971]. From Work to Text. *In:* HEATH, S. (ed.) *Image – Music – Text*. London: Fontana Press: 157.

77 Cloninger, C. 2010. GltchLnguistx: The Machine in the Ghost/Static Trapped in Mouths. GLI.TC/H Chicago: http://lab404.com/glitch/ (accessed 04/09/2017)

78 At this point I was briefly interested in situating my studio equipment as full collaborators. This is a summary of ANT by Latour:

> So what is on its agenda? The attribution of human, unhuman, nonhuman, inhuman, characteristics; the distribution of properties among these entities; the connections established between them; the circulation entailed by these attributions, distributions and connections; the transformation of those attributions, distributions and connections, of the many elements that circulates and of the few ways through which they are sent. (1996: 7)

I shifted my idea from one of *direct agency* to one of *negotiation*; the latter, as I explain in 1.2:51, sits more comfortably with my dislike of the concept of *mastery*.

79 It seems no accident that I came up with this project around the same time that I left my partner and came out as a queer woman. As much as I love the idea of recontextualising this project as one of queering the page, I think it is just one of the many strands and perhaps best teased out later with the wisdom of hindsight.

author and printer. It was a material exploration of what Jerome McGann and Lisa Samuels call acts of 'deformance': disrupting poetic texts in different ways to exchange new meanings through 'a play of differences' (2001: 111). This, however, was going to start from the inside and work outwards.

My project pitch to Angela was something like this: *let's explore the motility of text and the print-performance of an open, unresolved idea that could morph through various iterations and outcomes. Come to my studio and set some type by hand, and leave it for me to play with.* There were no rules as to what she should set. Angela's response was keen. She was extremely open to giving me a free hand with what emerged from her typesetting session, as long as she could eventually interact with it too, because her own working process uses disruption, disorder and erasure as a creative methodology.

Angela: *This kind of invitation is very attractive to me as an artist: it signals play that is generative, and interventions that stem from an equality of artistic practice. I saw it as an invitation to be in dialogue with another artist through materials: poetry, letterpress, paper, ink. A material conversation where the dialogue between artists follows the logic of the fold, doubling the developable surface not in a mathematical way but as an aesthetic consequence of collaborative problem solving.*

As a printmaker I often use random composition, it's an art form that with its processes, stages and potential for variation responds to this methodology. But I also respond to its meditative experience and results, and its attentiveness, responsiveness and humility toward materials. This crosses all disciplines and media that I use. I also introduce processes into my poetry that will defamiliarise the text to enable less predictable outcomes. From this it won't be surprising to know I'm a great admirer of John Cage's output and the results of his ideas on indeterminacy. Cage writes that indeterminacy is "the possibility of a unique form" (2010: 65). Working with someone else always introduces the unexpected into a work and generates unpredictable outcomes.[80]

HER COMPOSITIONAL SPACE

> *Both the practice and the study of human culture comprise a network of symbolic exchanges. Because human beings are not angels, these exchanges always involve material negotiations. Even in their most complex and advanced forms – when the negotiations are carried out as textual events – the intercourse that is being human is materially executed...*
>
> Jerome McGann[81]

This time, instead of starting with finished poems, as with *interference*, we started from the compositional space of Angela's mind. The initial type-setting occurred in September 2015, when Angela came to Canberra for a week. We wasted no time

80 This, and the following quotes from Angela are a mixture of personal communications by email and in person, but they are formalised by their inclusion in our joint paper given to the 2017 Artists Book Brisbane Event (ABBE) in Brisbane, 6 July 2017.

81 *The Textual Condition*, 1991: 3.

getting into the studio, and I sat her down at a drawer of 14pt Baskerville, prosaically selected because I have a lot of that typeface, giving us scope for a larger project if needed, but also because it is a font professionally recognized as having superior qualities for reading cognition.[82] I handed her a **composition (setting) stick** and a typecase map. We quickly realized that Angela had left her glasses in Brisbane. Despite the inconvenience to her, I was delighted: I really did want our source text to be imperfect, and setting when partially blind was a good start (*IMAGE 38*).

Angela had a notebook with her containing various jottings, drawings and the scraps of a poem that had been brewing in her head, which she glanced at occasionally while setting. I have a photo of her peering at the type wearing her prescription sunglasses. We also conversed while she set, and listened to Radio National, as well as music. She would stop and start, drink tea, gesticulate and drop the type, then reset it in whichever order it fell. When she filled a stick to capacity, she would just stop the text midstream. I'd move the lines onto a tray and tie them up with string, and then she would start filling the stick again with whatever text came to mind at that moment. She did seven paragraphs of type (paragraph-length because the composition stick would only hold about five or six lines of 14pt type), which sat on the tray, neatly tied like parcels, able to be moved into whatever order we pleased (*IMAGE 39*). They became our key texts: raw material, ready in unordered stanzas.

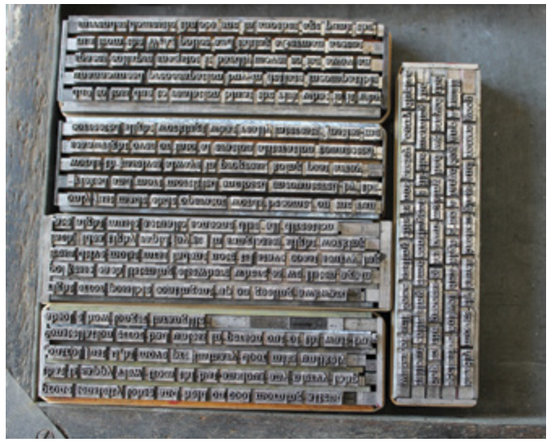
Angela: *The method of producing that typeset[ting] follows to some extent one of the methods I usually employ. Stream of consciousness into a notebook (this time a setting stick) and isolated words or phrases filling gaps randomly without me looking at what I have written to allow some random interjacency. Eventually I move it onto a computer often in the form of prose and continue to defamiliarise the text by randomly assigning line lengths or re-ordering words or lines to create new juxtapositions. At some point I pick up threads and say* yes this is what I was thinking, this is the narrative *and start adding and taking away and ordering and disordering until the poem says 'enough already*!'

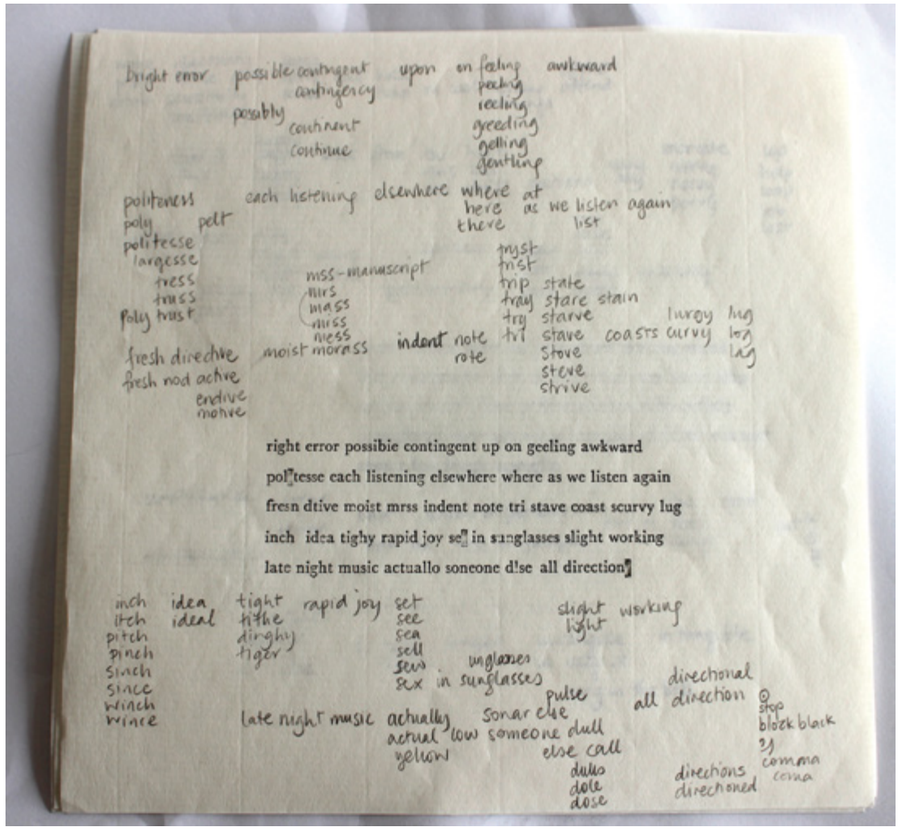
Towards the end of the week, we roughly inked the seven texts and proofed them onto newsprint to discover what 'delights' Angela had constructed (see *IMAGE 46*). They were fantastic: typographic errors, random punctuation, upside down letters, upside-down blocks (so that the back of the letter-block printed as a black rectangle) and wrong fonts. Our eyes were constantly snagged, the reading was slowed down dramatically, and we were instantly pulled into alternative readings.

82 Designed by Englishman John Baskerville in 1754, this font has been constantly in use for both long-form and decorative typography ever since. It was one of the first to be digitized, and serves as an inspiration for many book text-faces. See Yau, 2010: http://idsgn.org/posts/know-your-type-baskerville/ (accessed 04/09/2017).

38 Angela in my studio, September 2015, setting type in her sunglasses.

39 Five of the seven 'key blocks'.





40 A proofed 'key block' with my brainstorming lists

Craig Dworkin, discussing poet Susan Howe's poetic practice of visual disruption in his 2003 *Reading the Illegible*, talks of her deliberate 'medial noise' caused by

> misaligned and skewed type, archaic word forms and apparent misspellings, stutterings and omissions, reduced leadings, palimpsests, and a whole host of irregularities which move the text beyond opacity to a near illegibility... (47)

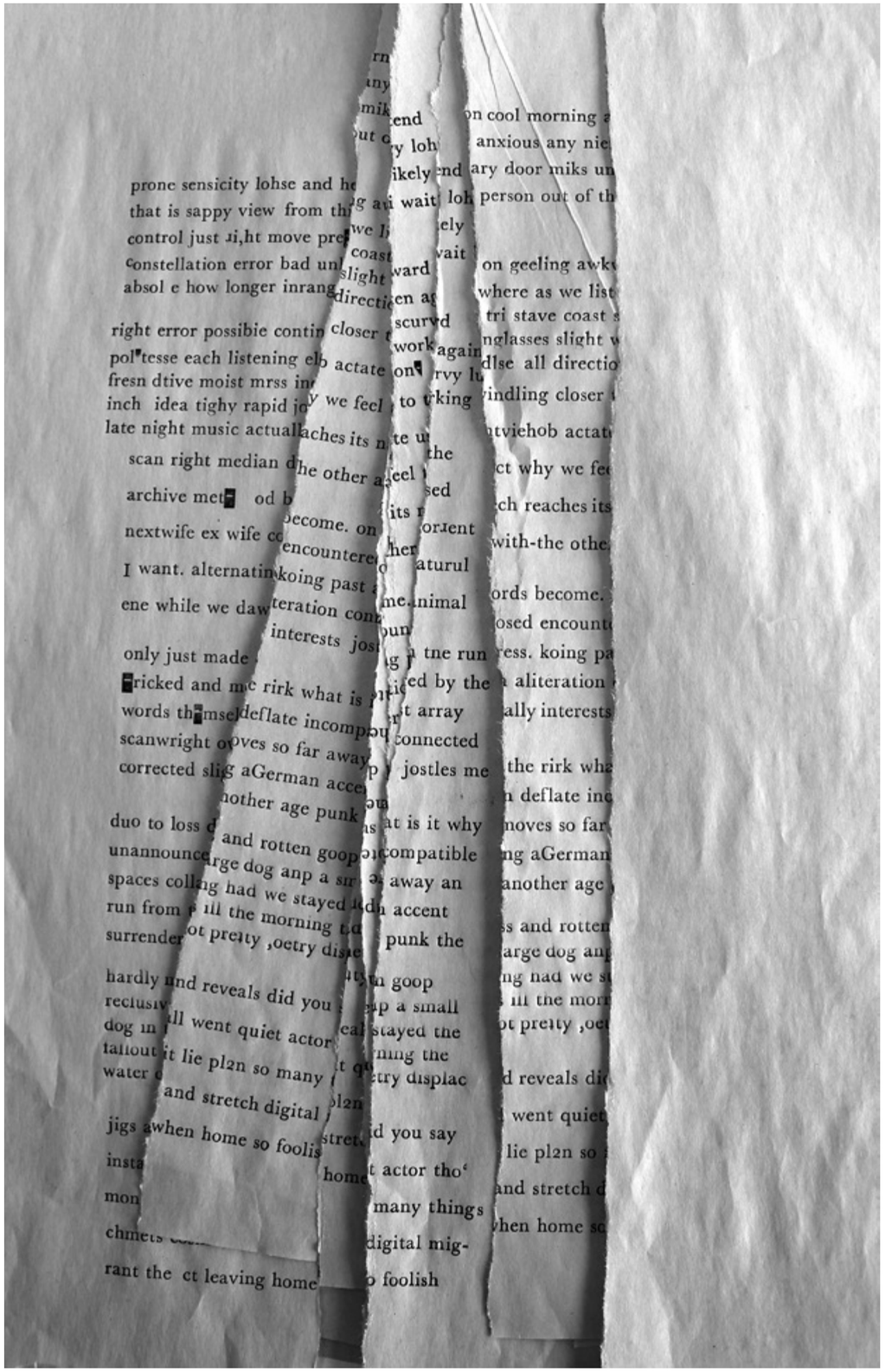
At this point our blocks were stanza-like starting-points of visual noise, and we were ready to push outward through medial irregularities to an extremity of de-formance: there is a small scrawled line in my project notes from this time that reflects our discussions about a way forward. It says *disrupt the already disrupted text*.

We tested a few ideas together: overprintings, tearing shards of newsprint and overlapping them (*IMAGE 41*), and also printing each 'stanza' onto two separate sheets of paper and taking a set each to manually annotate with lists of alternate readings (*IMAGE 40*). We came up with the title of *Working Papers*, with the intention that nothing we produced from these key texts would be final or fixed, and printed it on some full sheets of Japanese washi paper. Angela also rustled through my wood type and picked out some words that she felt could be used in over-printings or even as themes that I could deliberate on. She lay the letters out on my work table: HONE, KEY, TORRENT, OBLITERATE. Then she flew home to Queensland, with a bundle of wet proofs.

PAPERSPACE

The open, unbound book that was to emerge as *Working Papers* needed to feel contingent, ready to reconfigure, able to shift in and out of rhythm yet still feel like a cohesive publication. We didn't want it skewed toward print folio, which is a single-page unbound format that can pass for a book if presented within a cover or wrapper but does not have a narrative sequence or logic. My experience with printing Owen Bullock's *Redex* had helped me appreciate the importance of what Piper calls 'the fold and turn' (2012: 522), something only activated when the page is turned by the hand, removing it from the static tableau of display. The deliberately problematic text set by Angela suggested that the page format should be equally challenging: extra folds, extra turns, in a way that didn't overcomplicate its essential bookness. This was achieved by folding down the full sheets into quarters but not cutting the top folds, like a bookblock waiting to be guillotined, or for its new owner to cut them by hand.

I had pulled full sheets of Gyokurya washi from my paper drawer when printing key-block proofs with Angela; we tested its ability to hold fine lines of ink, and it performed well. I normally don't work with washi, because it can be too soft and unsized to print fine detail, resulting in bleeding if the ink is too thick, but in this case I knew that I would be handling these pages extensively, building up layers at the press, and washi has a deceptively quiet strength for all its softness, thanks to its plant-based long-fibre multidirectional grain. Gyokurya, a medium-weight white rice paper, has beautiful tactility, with one side very smooth and the other having a toothy texture without the fibrous appearance of mulberry washi. As the hand turns the page, the change of



41 newsprint proofings of the 'key blocks'.

surface is obvious to the touch, smooth to striated, inviting a Deleuzian musing about the haptic tension of a fold passing 'between two stories' (Deleuze & Strauss, 1991: 243). The sheets have wonderful show-through when layered and interesting things happen as the page is turned. In essence, it felt like the right paper to commit to for our work. I folded the full sheets into quarters and during our initial session, we printed the seven key-blocks randomly through the pages, one per quarter-fold of two sheets, with the title on the eighth side. We suddenly had a very basic book-block: folded, uncut and unsewn.

At this point, I didn't go back to this project for a few months, caught up in other activities. That creative distance is a useful one, because it allows the eye to cool, and returns a sense of discovery to the work when re-opened. There is also the version of the book that lives in the back of the brain, mulling over, being virtually visualized. At the time Angela was setting the type, I'd just bought a copy of *Emily Dickinson: Gorgeous Nothings* (Werner & Bervin, 2013) and was entranced by Dickinson's 'word-stacks' of alternative possibilities written on shards of opened-up envelopes. Until I got back to the project, streams of words were moving through my imagination like torrents of data – not just Angela's words but all my readings and writings.

MY COMPOSITIONAL SPACE

> *Poetic space, the space and 'outcome' of language, never exists like an object but is always spaced out and scattered.* Maurice Blanchot[83]

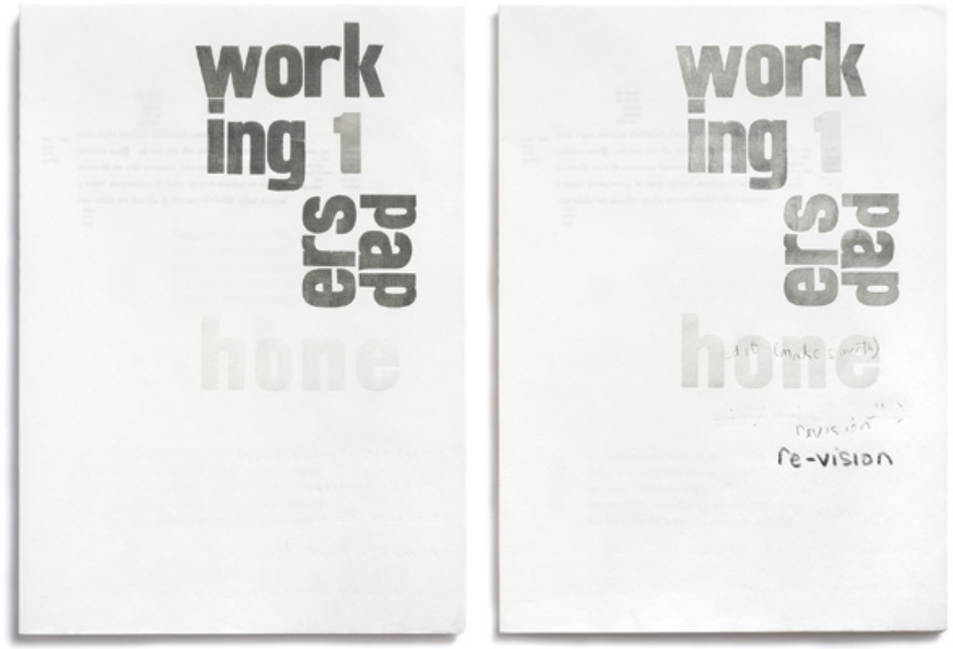
Finally, I found a sustained period of time in which to dedicate weeks to printing just this project. It was winter in Canberra, and my home studio at that time, an under-house garage, was incredibly cold, so I worked bundled up, with fingerless gloves, the tips of my fingers black from the grime of the type. As I worked, I could see my own breath. It felt bizarrely Dickensian.

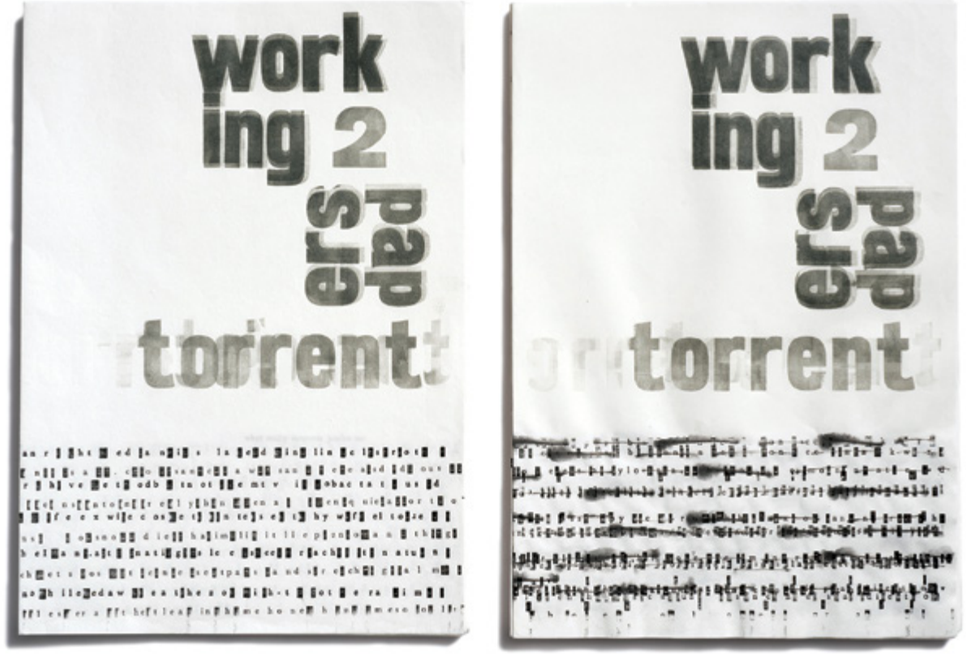
There were at least two ways that I wanted to approach the text blocks: the first, as puzzling tracts that desired translation, or at least suggestions for translation: words, leading to words, stacked as paratext, inspired by Emily Dickinson's searching lists. The second was to set the blocks up as a four-page imposition, two up, two down, *mirroring*, situating them on the page in a traditional quasi-golden ratio position (which helps position each as an authoritative text), and then subvert it in various ways.

I decided to follow both directions, to support that concept of *working* papers, testing grounds for ideas. One (*hone*) is to be ostensibly 'neater' than the other, homing in on what interests *me* about the text (*IMAGE 42*). The other (*torrent*)

> *CF prints blocks outwards.*
> *exploding/expanding/growing*
> *becoming less articulate*
> ...
> *each part is a repeatable element: letters, division lines, blocks, spaces.*
> (CF notebook entry, May/June 2016)

83 Blanchot, M. 2000 [1959]. The Book to Come. In: Rothenberg, J. & Clay, S. (eds.) 2000. *A Book of the Book*, New York: Granary Books: 150.





42 *Working Papers: Hone*, covers. Left: original, right: AG response.

43 *Working Papers: Torrent*, covers. Left: original, right: AG response.

is not only an experiment in print-performing textual activity to open up reading possibilities for others, but it is experimenting with *material accessibility* (*IMAGES 43, 45, 57*). By this, I mean that I want to make a work that shows the marks of process, is imperfect and already (for want of a better phrase) 'shop-soiled' through its intensive production regime. This is not an excuse for 'sloppy' work; the 'dirty' mark-making and grunge effects within this work (I have other reasoning for the *1962* piece) has been done with purpose and skill: I am performing less desirable qualities as an entry point for touch and experience, to encourage handling and minimize the fear of destroying something precious.

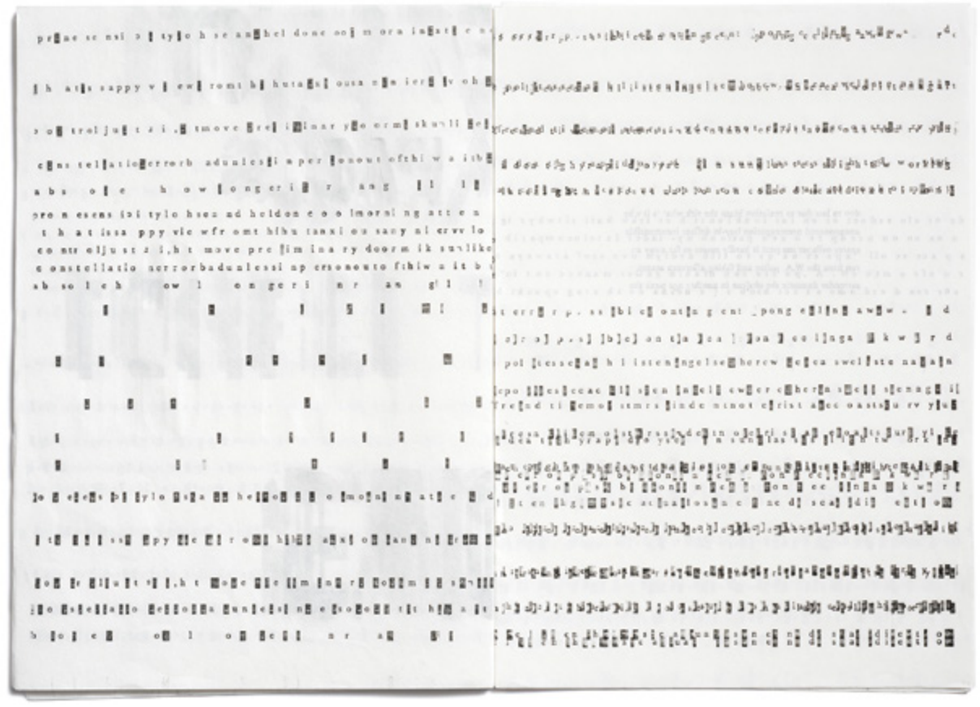
That initial set of pages with the blocks printed on random positions became *Hone*: my close readings of the strange moments of Angela's words, building Dickinsonian lists of alternatives that read like small stories in their own right. My responses are paratextual wordplay, referencing marginal glosses and notes made in books by readers through the centuries. They are set in footnote-sized type, subservient to the printed authority of the key texts. Later, after the revelations of the other pages unfolded, I turned over one of the footnoted formes and printed it upside down, to make a shadow mirroring of the notes, something seemingly impermeable but in reality coded, like the Rosetta Stone (*IMAGE 44*). By this I mean that upside-down type, despite being nothing but black blocks, could theoretically be deciphered by readers who understand that each block is the width of its particular letter. [84]

I also picked out phrases from the key blocks and printed them back into the folded pages in layers sifting into or emerging from the respective text, so that they would show through the layers and unpack as the pages turned (*IMAGES 47-49*), providing a (false) sense of narrative between the blocks.

My second response was a completely new set of pages, on the same kind of paper. *Torrent* is pure deformance: the working taxonomy listed by McGann and Samuels is 'reordering, isolating, altering, and adding' (2001: 17). I would set up a key-block, print it as a discrete unit, then sit next to me a mixed container of spacing blocks with all the varieties available to me in 14pt (3xems, ems, ens, thicks, mids, thins, hair) (*IMAGE 50*). I would dip into it without looking, trying not to think consciously of what my cold fingers were finding, and 'randomly' (as a stream of unconsciousness) space out the lines of letters until they were as wide as the sheets of paper, which was just under the total width of the press bed. Once they were stretched out, I would print three sheets,[85] then readjust the vertical position of the spaced lines, moving them up and down the press bed, up and down on the paper, overprinting the same three sheets. Each time I moved

84 Upside-down type, despite being nothing but black blocks, could theoretically be deciphered by readers who understand that each block is the width of its particular letter. For example, an *n* is a different width to an i, an *m* to an *e*. This would be asking much more time of a reader than they would be prepared to give, but it is possible.

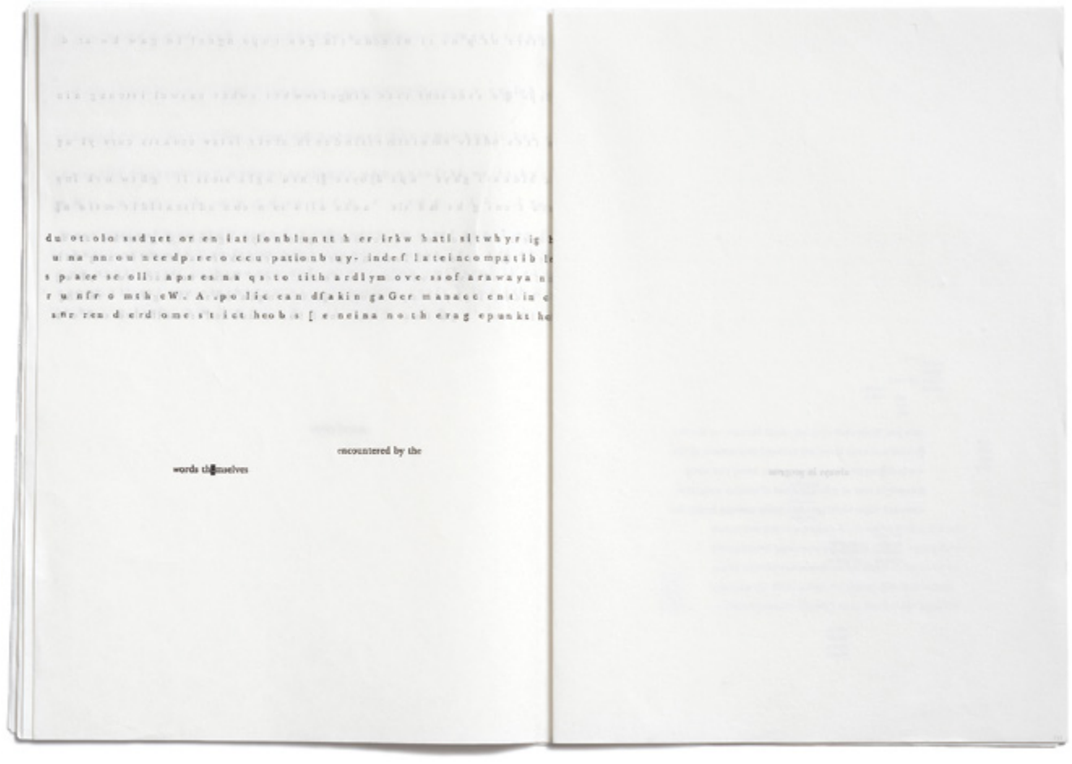
85 One for Angela, one for me, one for spare (in case of emergencies). This is akin to leaving a copy of a thesis in a different building in case yours burns down.

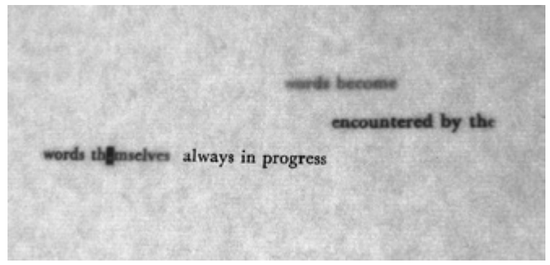


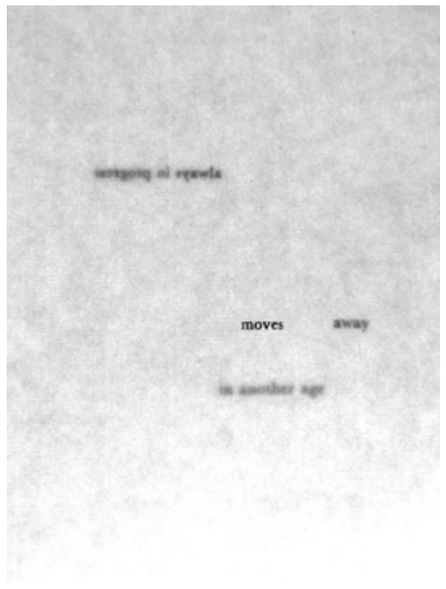
44 *Working Papers: Hone*, detail.

45 *Working Papers: Torrent*, detail.

46 excerpts from *Working Papers: Hone*, showing the 'key blocks' with their respective word-stacks.







47 page spread from *Working Papers: Hone*, showing lines moving through the pages.

48 a view through the pagespace with the section held together to the light. The block in question is in *image 25*, bottom left.

49 another cluster of interspersed lines, moving away from the keyblock in *IMAGE 45*, bottom right.

50 spacing and re-spacing the letters on the pressbed.

their vertical position, I would also readjust the horizontal spacing, block by block, so that no line was printed exactly the same way twice (unless I consciously doubled it). I printed and overprinted (*IMAGE 45*), shifting between the sheets so that when the type wore down and thickened, it disintegrated and integrated with itself in a temporal palimpsest.

CF: *As I work in the studio, it's all in slow motion: slabs of days separated by long spaces of weeks. Sometimes I'm honing in on the words that are already printed, the words that are already set. Sometimes I'm pulling things out that respond to the way I am moving through the pages. When it was all flat, it was words. When it is folded, it is page movements and motion and words that carried through. Making a book involves flat and through and around and open then close then turn. It's sculptural but no decision by me can be made as fast as a sculptor's decision; everything has to be set up and moved and placed and tested and inked then tested again and moved. And while things are moving, other things move in the head and plans change and words change and everything moves.* (voice memo 26092016)

Angela: *This theoretically-based visual strategy that Caren used echoes my own practice: random filling of gaps, play around with line length, and poetic enjambment, which is deciding where to end or turn a line in order to create ambiguity, meaning and surprise. So the poetics of my poetry writing also mirrors the poetics of Caren's visual decision-making.*

Unlike Melinda's book, where each page is spacialised with poetry construction, this version of the book needed to unlock the printed blocks, to lose control of the text in order to create new text. Walter Ong says that 'Print situates words in space more relentlessly than writing ever did. Writing moves words from the sound word to the world of visual space, but print locks words into position in this space. Control of position is everything in print' (1982: 121).

I wanted to unlock the letters, lose their control, but within the material constraints of the press bed, and the type, which is all straight lines. So their release had to be along this linear constraint.

> CF: *One of the luxuries of working with hand-set type is the chance to change your mind, to adjust, add, subtract, to gather and disperse. Not, granted, as easily as with computer setting, but more so than instantly concretising an idea by sending off a virtual file and receiving back something solid, such as a plastic relief plate, or a POD book.* (working note, Sept 2016)

51 *Working Papers: Torrent*, detail of offset wood type 'centrefold' print.

In her presentation on the effect of technological affordances upon poetry, Drucker says that letterpress, as the dominant means of textual reproduction for the last five centuries, developed 'an isomorphic relationship between [its] graphical means – which loves straight lines – and poetic form as having straight lines' (2011: 6:52). Jacobson reinforces this:

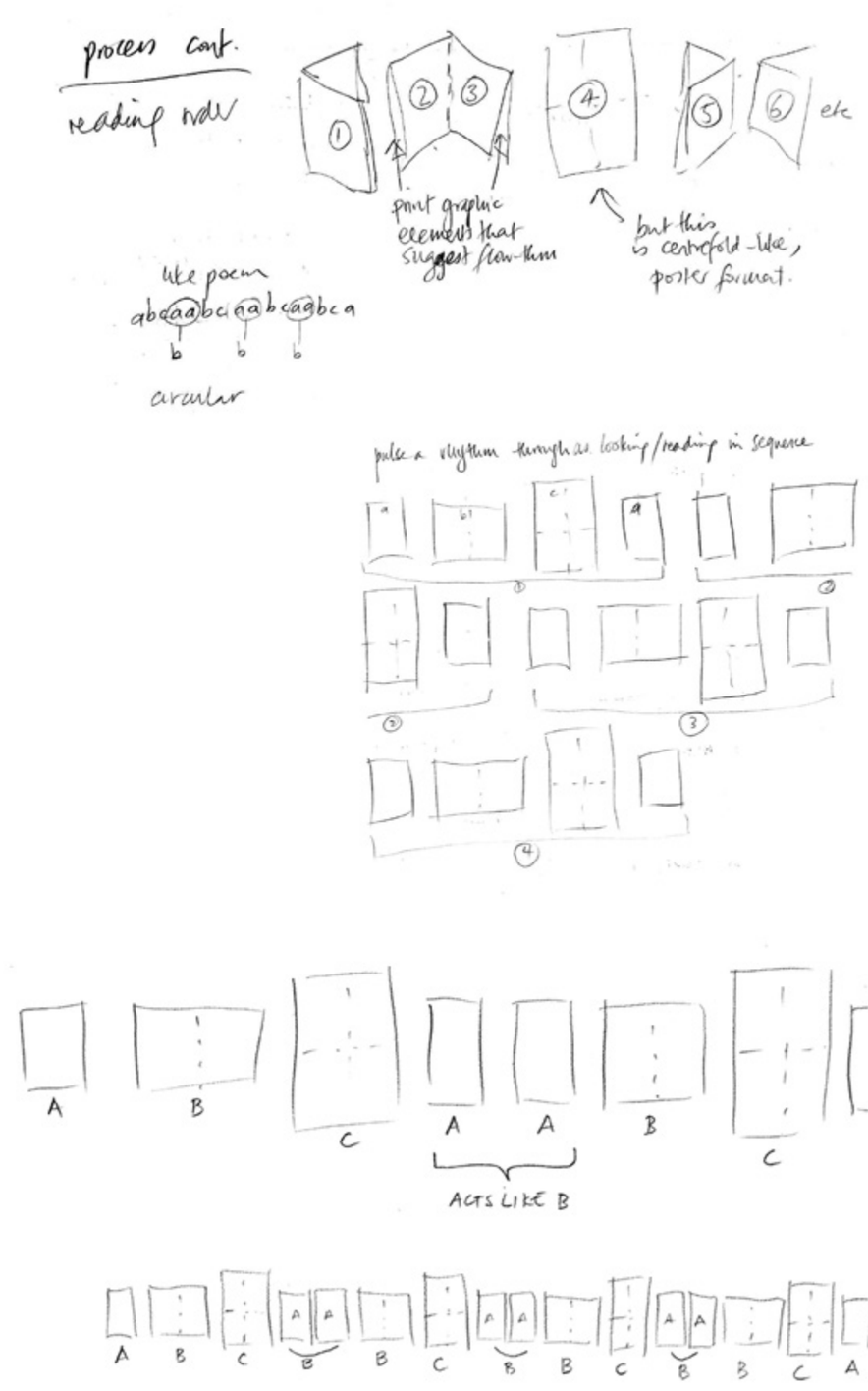
> Whether printers and poets observe it consciously or not, they are currently stuck to a rectangle grid, using rules for print from the seventeenth century. We continue to use white space to describe a shape, on screen and on paper, and most poems are made of language in lines, using our sturdy, small, and roman alphabet, with or without various degrees of illustration or graphic enhancement. The printer's measure meets the poet's line in yet another iteration of technology. In HTML coding, as on the typewriter, producing the line end requires deliberate keyboard action: not the sliding of the 'knee' and clamp of the composing stick, not the swinging gesture of the carriage return, but the keystroke command to break the line. HTML code, in most cases, does not signify 'page' margin. Nevertheless, the line continues to look like poetry, the letters and lines of poetry continue to remember the printer's form or page, and white space marks a ragged right margin. Perhaps the most typical rule from all printing practice is the recommendation to follow formatting from a previous source. (2008: 302)

There are, of course, ways to make type shape-shift out of the grid, as Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* (1918)[86] and Drucker's *Stochastic Poems* (2013) demonstrate. But this effect is now easily achievable via the screen (computer and screenprint) and not really worth the hours of letterpress labour unless truly necessary for the conceptual vision. This is one of the reasons why *Vitreous Syneresis* became an animation: the necessary movement of the text I'd envisaged was worth the hours of tweaking my digital images, and it openly reflected the medium used. I did create pages of non-linear effect in some of the 'centrefolds' of the pages by experimenting with printing in an offset manner with wood type, using the 'key words' that Angela had left me (*IMAGE 51*).

Deliberate misprinting is fascinating to a generation raised with desktop printers that perform accurately. I use it as a legitimate strategy to contrast with the ubiquitous perfection of digital printing (itself carefully achieved over centuries of technological striving) and the immateriality of on-screen presentation, and I connect it with society's disconnect between the expectation of seamlessness that the digital promises and the reality of glitch and misdirection to which it often defaults.[87] I am creating *facture*

86 This very famous work is an instance of *invisible labour* (see 52n56): Apollinaire drew his poems in pencil and gave them to a printer, 'G. Roy of Poitiers', who printed the Calligrammes for the publisher Mercure de France. See the drawings at https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2014/02/27/apollinaires-visual-poetry/ and the colophon of *Calligrammes* at https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Apollinaire_-_Calligrammes.djvu/206 (both accessed 04/09/2017). Similarly, one of Australia's best-known artist books, *TH WA WI NEVE EN*, 1991, by Ruark Lewis (*IMAGE 14*) was printed for him by Sydney printer Nick Summers, who 'ghosts' for many artists without leaving a trace. Summers said (PERS COMM, c.2014) that his press imprint is 'Plum Press' but when jobbing he adds a 'b' to make 'Plumb Press', yet very little of his work shows either.

87 A delicious irony: after reading Hayles (2008: 137) on this matter, I followed her link for the essay '404: Doubting the Web' by Stuart Moulthrop (2000): http://iat.ubalt.edu/moulthrop/essays/404.html, which leads to an updated website for of SM's institution, with no sign of him or his work. (checked 04/09/2017).



52 Page rhythm ideas from my project notes

(Summers, 2003: 684) that will lead the eye and the hand away from the everyday toner smear, perhaps encouraging a question as to what adventures these pages have had.

INTERVENTIONS

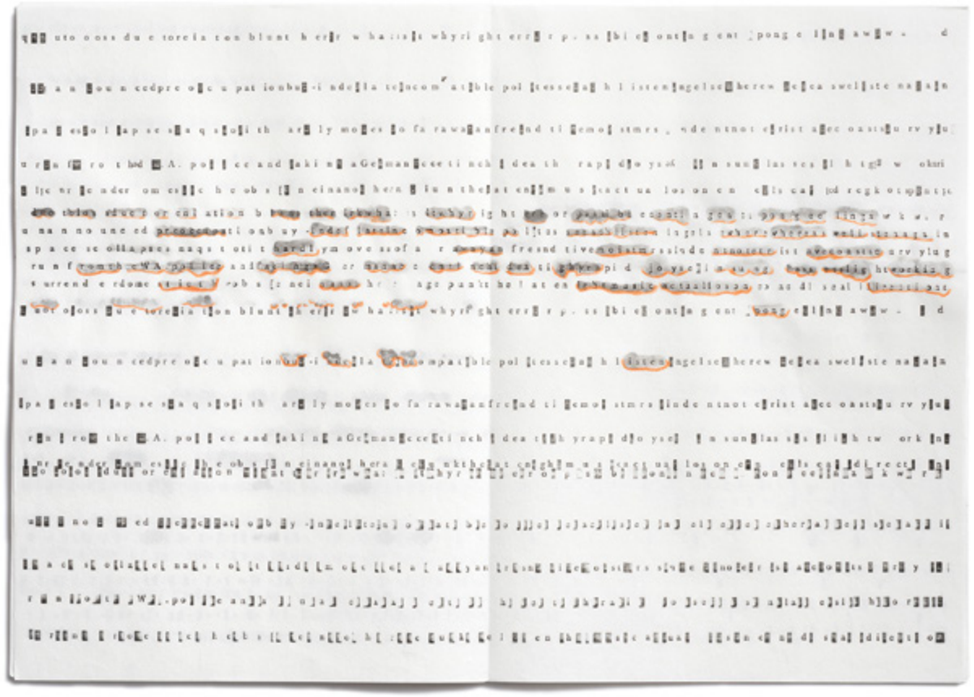
As I printed the pages, I would choose one to test, fold it into four and then unfold and keep printing. Negotiating the uncut page fold was like wrestling with a newspaper, which is almost a nostalgic act in itself. I started looking at the folds as a sequence, thinking across the page openings as whole units, including the 'centrefold' of each signature, which opened up rather than turned across. In my journal I labelled each unit with a letter, and charted the progress of moving through, say, four of these signatures. The result is very similar to the notation of metre in a poem: single pages are A. Double spreads are B, centre spreads are C. Moving through the pages looks like ABCAABCAABCAABCA. But if the reading pages are prone on a table, A is doubled to become a B, so ABCBBCBBCBBCA (*IMAGE 52*). Before this, I'd planned how to arrange the order of the pages, but once I'd made this rhythmic observation, everything shifted. During the compilation, I paid careful attention to the Bs that were doubled As, to that movement across the unbound gutter space, wanting to really create a torrenting of words through the pagespace.

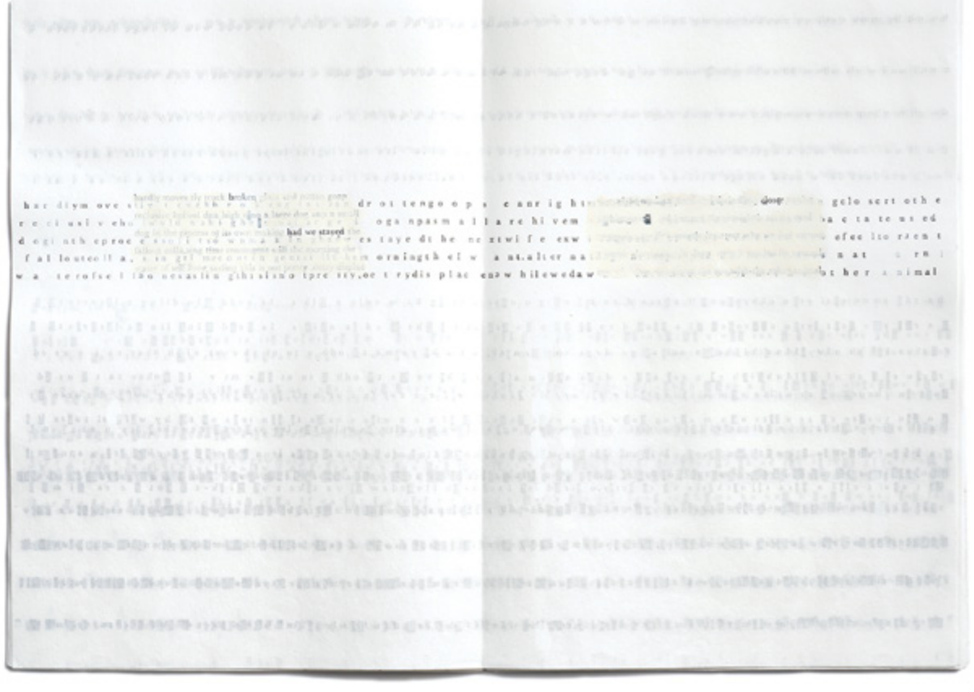
> **Angela:** *I really liked Caren's schema of ABCAABCAABCAABCA; it looks as if it is a wayward rhyming scheme over 16 pages (16 because of the mathematics of the folded page) rather than the 'turn/fold' or* volta *in the 14 lines of a sonnet.*

The aim was always to have a set each; having extra sets for distribution wasn't important because we knew other outcomes would emerge from those pages (like *The Future, Unimagine*, below). We considered these sets as 'key sources' in the same way that the blocks were 'key blocks'. I did add an extra sheet every time (especially after my studio flooded, and I started worrying about losing work). In the end, each page was printed three times, with one sent to Angela, another progressed by me, and a third that stopped at the sending point, so there are three distinct unique sets.[88]

> CF: *I've placed yellow Post-it notes through the pages to denote bits that I want to add to or overprint, to work into the pages to move them from where they are at the moment. … I'll send one set to Angela and then keep working on my sets. She'll open her package with me using Skype and we'll discuss what happens next. She plans to work through her pages quite heavily with ink and wax, which is what I was doing with Sarah Rice's work so I'm glad it's flowing through to this work. I think Angela's copy is going to be more obfuscated and… fucked up than mine will be …*
>
> (voice memo 24092016)

88 The third set is still in progress, and will take its own shape in time.





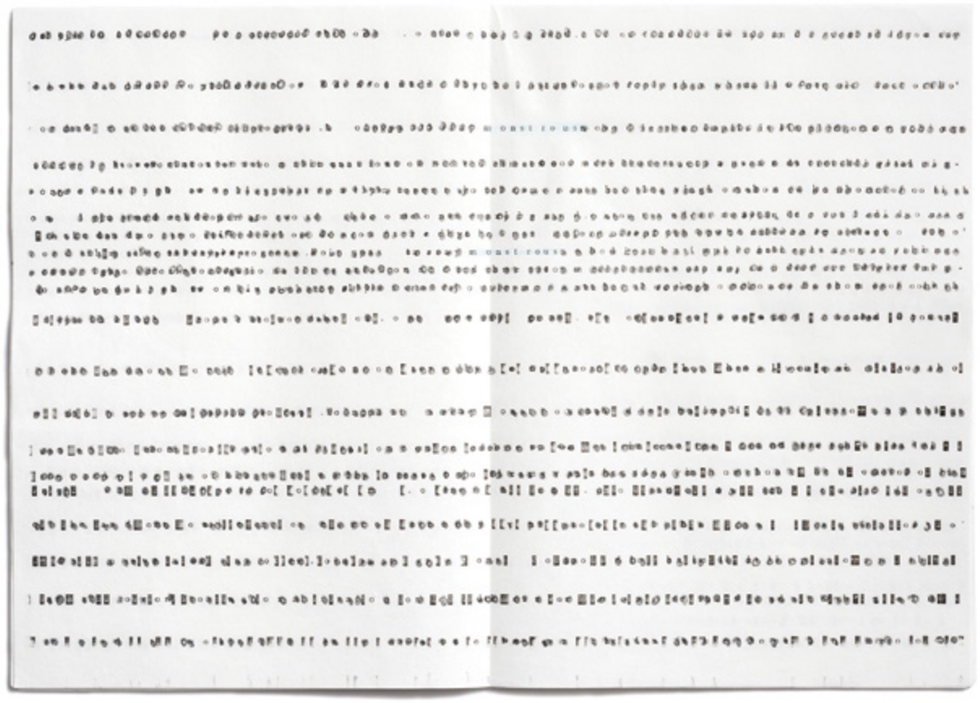
53 detail from *Working Papers: Torrent*, AG response.

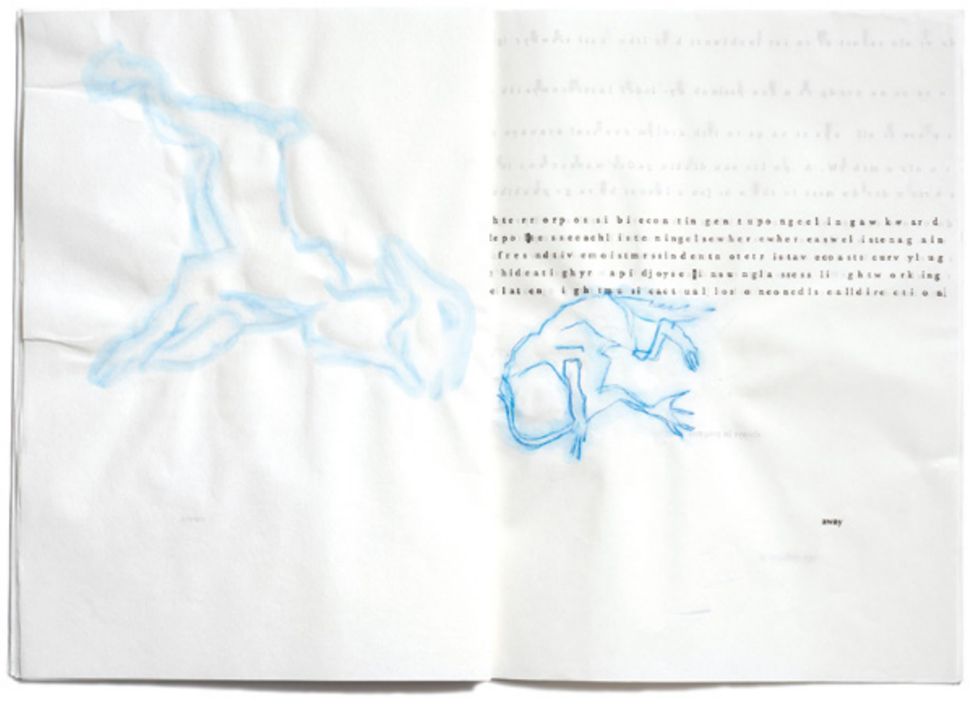
54 detail from *Working Papers: Torrent*, AG response.

Photos: Brenton McGeachie

I delivered a set of pages to Angela in October 2016 and awaited her response. She didn't use ink and wax, instead choosing to draw through the pages, saying:

> **Angela:** *The original aim with Torrent was visual, was obliteration of the text. As a writer who is also an artist, I have always been interested in the border between text and image, between a literate reading and a visual reading of a work that contains both text and image, or that borderland where text may become image. My intention therefore became to enhance the visuality of the text by disruption. After all, it is not necessary to completely obliterate to disrupt the reading of the text in a literate sense, and an open and less resolved iteration could prove more interesting.*
>
> *The methods I chose for this task were deliberately indicative of manuscript marks (the visual marks employed by a writer). They include highlighting, which increases the visibility of one word over others (IMAGE 53) and therefore may change the reading; and counting marks that introduce a graphical notation other than the alphabet for the reader to decipher. This counting refers to my writing practice of placing arbitrary word limits on lines, to cause enjambment, and to break the clear prosody to find new poetic meanings in the narrative. I have also drawn underlines which curve through the text itself, therefore subverting their emphasising purpose.*
>
> *I also employed cancellations, often used by poets in notebooks to indicate a word or phrase has moved into a draft of a poem, to make sure the phrase isn't mined again for another poem (IMAGES 54, 55). A cancellation in this case should be read as indicating positive worth and transition to a new iteration or mode, rather than as a negative. The cancellation marks also reminded me of the power of the censor and the act of translation required to read the intention of the writer when all that is left is a partial record. It should be noted that the visual power of a censored text increases as we become visually aware of both the author's and the censor's opposing intentions. The tension created by cancellation is palpable.*
>
> *My own practice is not to cancel lines in notebooks but to move the early draft into word processing where the blocks of text can be manipulated in the way that physical type is with letterpress. In this way some of Caren's methods for deforming the seven key texts mirror my practice as a poet.*
>
> *Similarly to Caren, I treated* Hone *as a contrast to* Torrent. *I made some early manuscript interventions related to the text upon the sheets, at first seeing Hone as an edit of the text. Soon however I realised that what I wanted was a further re-visioning of the text as artwork.*
>
> *Although I revisited the written notes, it was the images I had drawn in my notebook around the time of my visit to Caren's studio that ended up being transferred onto the sheets of Hone via carbon paper monotype and water-soluble colour pencil drawing (IMAGE 56). I chose to work with carbon paper because it is related to writing and the typewriter. When I went to the newsagents to buy it, I was told that the blue was traditionally used for*





55 detail from *Working Papers: Torrent*, AG response.

56 detail from *Working Papers: Torrent*, AG response.

Photos: Brenton McGeachie

> *handwriting and the black for typewriters, so I chose the blue as being closest to the manual process of drawing. When Caren talks about the interesting effects of show-through, this echoes the way my drawing processes deliberately intrude upon the already disrupted text by showing through and bleeding through to the reverse side of the page, doubling and altering.*

I was intrigued by the image choices Angela had made and asked her about them: she texted back that they were a range of things: drawings from sculptures, a toy duck she'd bought for her dog when she was with me in Canberra, and road kill from her local area… in essence, all inanimate objects, which lie prone among our very active text.

> **Angela:** *The images themselves have no direct relationship to the writing apart from their timing, but as such they are part of the thinking processes that occur during the act of writing, particularly with a stream-of-consciousness beginning. The drawings continue the strategy of disruption. They exist as part of the 'location' of the work in the way that a conversation can be 'overwritten'/'enfolded' by another conversation as people pass others in the street.*

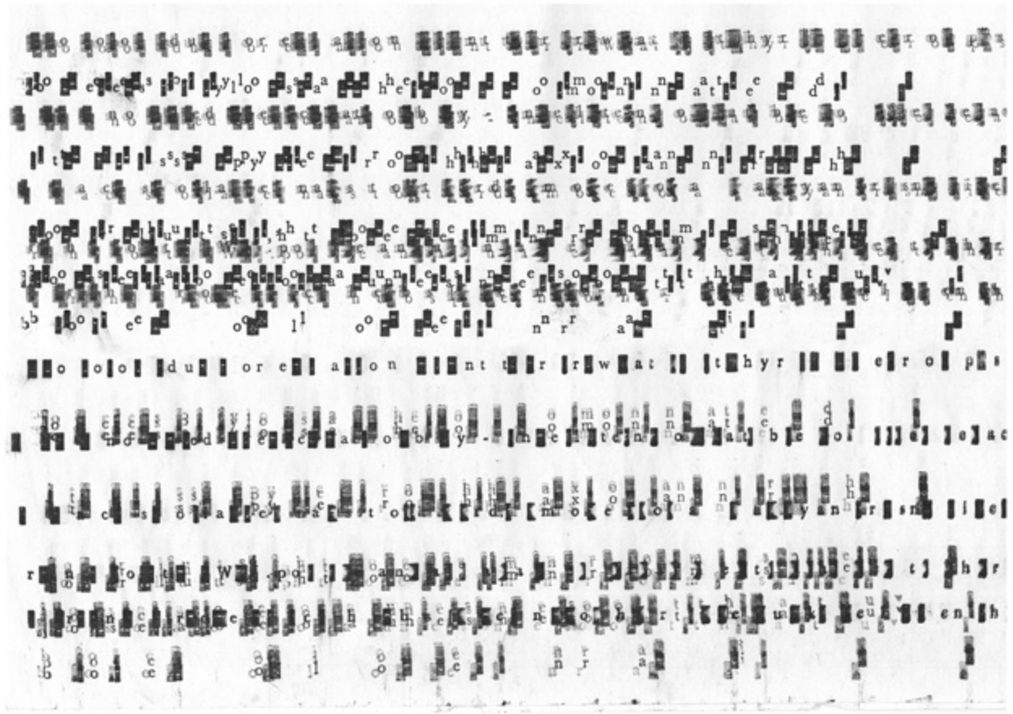
Angela and I talked about this project as an act of translation, but as it progressed I saw it more as an instance of what Haroldo de Campos calls *transcreation*, a new outcome that acknowledges the impossibility of translating something that is highly specific to its original form (2007: 315). Our two versions of *Hone* and *Torrent* sat beside each other in my final doctoral exhibition, but it became clear to both of us that they shouldn't be separated because they enfolded each other's work into an extended visual reading of the pages.

RESOLUTION, IRRESOLUTION

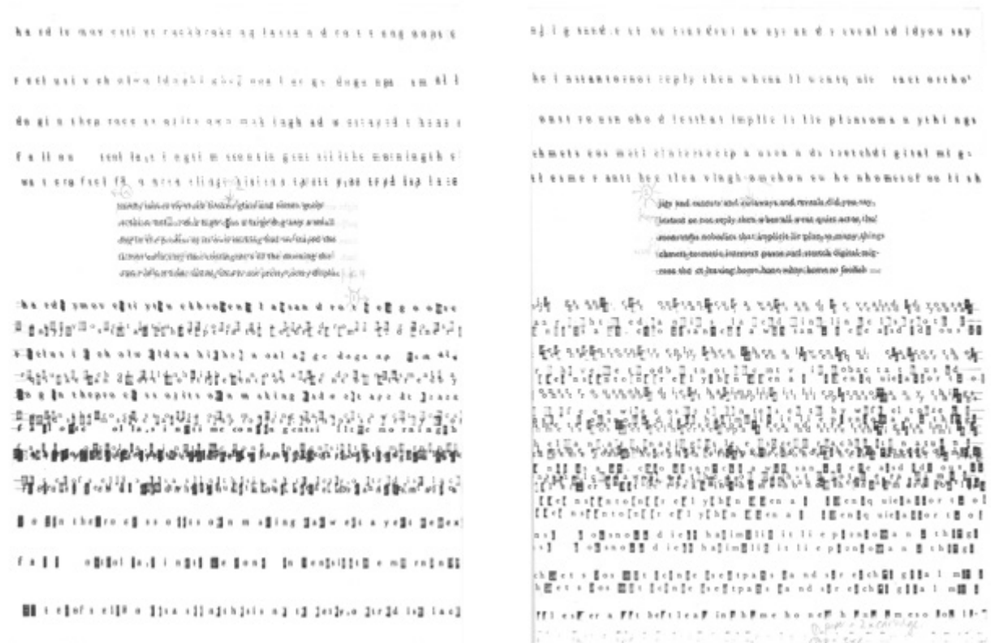
I had been printing the text blocks for a while when Angela sent me a copy of 'The Future, Un-imagine' (*TFU*), the resolved poem that had been developing in her mind when she came to Canberra to set the key blocks.[89] She was adamant that the poem was not a result of the type-setting, and this can be clearly seen when the two bodies of text are read side by side, but there are enough phrases in the key texts to connect the blocks as a snapshot of Angela's thought patterns in her compositional phase.

At first I thought that I should include the poem in *Working Papers*. My idea was to work it somehow into the C pages, so that the reader opened into a different space, holding more cohesive words. I set them in Baskerville 14pt, the same font as the key blocks. I let the type sit while I kept working. After a while I disliked that idea: maybe I should salt snatches of the poem though the exploded text? I reset the poem into longer lines, ignoring Angela's lineation. That forme sat in my studio, untouched, until well after the exhibition. I came to the realization, the longer I sat (in the *action-present*) and adjusted and printed and thought, that I didn't want the textual openness of the

89 Included in Appendix 4: 220.



57 *Postermarks 2* (magnified detail from *WP: Torrent*): A1 poster on Tyvek.



58 *Posterpages 1 & 2*, 2016. Both are A1 posters on Tyvek.

key blocks disrupted by something that made narrative sense. I decided to use it for our chapbook, to keep it separate from the artist book, so that if someone wanted to use it as some kind of codebreaker, they were welcome to, but it wasn't a necessary connection.

JOSTLING OTHERNESS

It is impossible to reproduce *Working Papers* 'accurately': its intense haptic materiality is lost when photographed or scanned, although the noise can be amplified by honing into detail to open up more readings. I have made various small swatches of detail that I call 'jostles', named after a line in the text that says 'what really interests jostles me'. I tested the effect of amplifying small details by exhibiting excerpts at a writing conference in late 2016:[90] I picked out scans of two marked-up page-proofs and another two of small details of 'block noise', all of which I blew up to A1 size (594 x 841 mm) and printed on strong white Tyvek sheets (via Officeworks), to hang in the corridors around the conference venue (*IMAGES 57-58*). Enthusiatic feedback received included observations about process and editing (regarding the marked-up pages) and music notation (about the magnified details).

As another visual iteration, in October 2016 I prepared a number of 'jostles' for 'Beam', a regular group projection event using the front of the ANU School of Art (unfortunately I have no images of this). I then included the original A1 Tyvek prints in *Reading Spaces*, grouped as a set of 'wall readings', which most visitors to the gallery space approached as visual objects rather than legible displays (unlike the writers from the conference), which demonstrates that context plays a large role in reception. These scanned details will, over the next few years, be pushed further into experimental reiterations including flatbed inkjet, screenprint and projection onto surfaces like glass, metal and fabric.

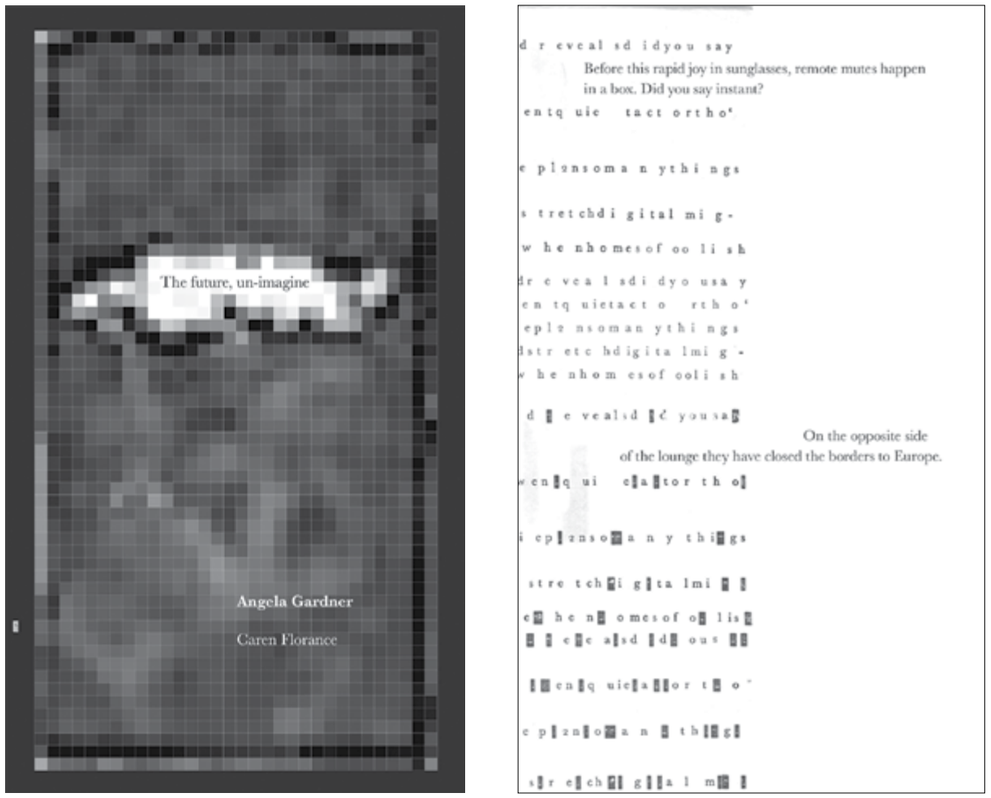
THE FUTURE, UN-IMAGINED

Each publication format has its affordances, but also its limitations. For both Angela's and Melinda's chapbooks, I teamed up with a Canberra small publisher whose production and distribution hinges upon the digital print-on-demand (POD) process. Recent Work Press (RWP), operated by Shane Strange, is dedicated to supporting local poets and interesting concepts and mitigates the commercial risk by using POD to print small batches of books that can be re-ordered when needed.[91] The POD process has transformed small publishing, but there are (as usual) limitations to what can be achieved when working with templated systems and this imposes another measure of creative constraint.

Instead of trying to re-produce a smaller, more affordable and more (physically) accessible version of the artist book – an impossible task – I took this as an opportunity

90 Australasian Association of Writing Programs annual conference, with the theme 'Authorised Theft', University of Canberra, 28-30 November 2016.

91 http://recentworkpress.com/ (accessed 04/09/2017).



104 *59* *The Future, Unimagine* (Recent Work Press & Ampersand Duck: 2017). Cover and three pages.

to use the ideas and jostles from *Working Papers* as a way of augmenting the reading of *TFU*. I really wanted to push the overprinted and upended type's performance of information torrenting, streaming in and out of pagespace.

When designing for POD, you have to work within very specific book formats that have very few variables. RWP uses a few of the trade paperback formats offered by their provider, mostly in the low-cost end of the range.[92] I chose the classic 127 x 213mm (5x8") format, and my paper options were: white or crème. Because the original book uses a cool white washi, white was an obvious choice, carrying through the stark black/white binary of the digital space populated with torrenting bytes.

This project iteration centres upon the poem as a separate entity from the text of the artist book, which meant that I could use the visual effect of the letterpress work illustratively in a way that I was reluctant to do in *Working Papers*. The scans I'd made of the pages flattened out the printing marks to a contrasting greyscale that would become dot-screened by the POD laser printing process, enhancing the connection to pixellation. The scans also picked up the original page show-through, so that there were two levels of marks, the immediate surface of the page and the hum of background grit (*IMAGE 59*).

TFU is a dense grid of words, with deliberately abruptly lineation to form subject enjambment. To move the poem through the pages, I parceled out my own line divisions, but kept the words in their original vertical line placement, so that if one were to put them back together, they would fit like a jigsaw.

I wanted to move the reader from the dense black cover through into bookspace via a portal of solid black pages that introduced the upended blocks and then kept them moving through and out the other end, back into the cover. It was a great idea, but when I received a proof copy of the book, I realized that it wasn't possible.

The two main flaws of POD printing stem from the distancing of production from personal satisfaction. So much focus is placed upon the basic cost level and speed of printing that there is constant compromise between design affordances and systems of efficiency. For example, until a few years ago, it was possible to control the design of the pages from the first page to the last, until a change of the printing system – i.e., constant tender negotiations with individual companies for printing contracts (see Schiff & Daniel, 2016) – pragmatically forced the inclusion of a large (ugly!) non-negotiable barcode on the final page of the textblock with no other text or image allowed in the space. This also forces a number of blank pages to be included to bring the (often carefully calculated) book-block back to a multiple of four in the page count.

The second flaw, at least with the company that RWP uses (chosen, predominantly, because this provider uses paper with 'tooth' rather than glossy digital stock) is their uneven finishing process, which is revealed by any attempt to use edge bleeding. The conventional way to finish a paperback book is to add the cover and then guillotine

92 http://www.ingramspark.com/plan-your-book/print/book-types (accessed 04/09/2017)

the entire book object. There are a number of different trim regions, one of which is a 'bleed' safe zone, where page elements that flow off the edge of the page can have extra extension to prevent interruption by an overly-wide trim. 'Trade' volumes, in POD expectations, are at the bottom rung of costed formats, and are not expected to have any 'fancy' design elements like bleed.

My proof copy returned with badly cut edges, to the point where my black entry and exit pages had a full 1.5mm white edge at the head, and a slanted thin white fore-edge slip, plus an illusion-destroying three full white pages at the end on top of the mandatory barcoded white back page. However, the cover was perfectly cropped, suggesting that the cover is printed and trimmed separately, perhaps even by another company, and then matched up (via barcode!) with the bookblock and assembled with glue. Feeling the edge of the book with my finger confirmed that the bookblock and cover were not trimmed together.

I was/am very happy with the rest of the design. The orchestrated visual show-through from the scanned images were layered up with the natural show-through from the physical pages, so that the whole book formed a palimpsest of machine noise. The ambiguities that Angela worked into the poem are echoed by the ambiguities created by the printing process. There are illustrative elements, such as on the page spread 'Why we feel torrent almost tolerant/ Outside/ the wind freshens to mass moist air above the continent. / Though as a rule clouds avoid this place' (*IMAGE 59*) The movement of blocks across the opening could be slow and lumbering to the right like an air mass moving towards the blankness of the next few pages, or darting fast off to the left, in and out as we turn verso to recto.

Adjustments to make the book work around the limitations of its production were necessary; I turned the black pages into an echo of the cover's blown-up, pixelated block, floating in the first page with the smaller blocks starting their march from the cover, moving through the book, letting them fade out into a clear white space at the end to allow the printer's intervention to seem less aggressively prosaic. The result feels true to the artist book origins of the text, and hopefully extends the reach of our work into the poetry community.

Angela and I are still keen to treat *Working Papers* as an ongoing concern; as I have indicated, there are many ideas that have emerged from both the analogue artefacts and the high-resolution scans of the pages, which open up opportunities to extend page space into virtual space.

2.3 BE SPOKEN TO: BUILDING WITH MELINDA SMITH

> *When Dickinson approached her compositional space to write, she was reading and responding to her materials, angling the page to write in concert with the light rule and laid lines in the paper, using internal surface divisions, such as overlapping planes of paper, to compose in a number of directional fields. Sometimes Dickinson's writing fills the space of the envelope like water in a vessel or funnels into the triangular shape of the flat. Often she invents columns, typically two, to further divide the space, demonstrating a propensity to break poem lines shorter and shorter. She draws additional line segments or arcs to further divide the compositional space. One would think that such a space would feel carved up, crammed, but it doesn't. The page feels bigger yet as if there has been an insertion of space.*
>
> Marta Werner & Jen Bervin[93]

Driving home one day, I heard an ABC radio segment about new designs for the robes of Australia's High Court judges. It took a good ten minutes for the designer to verbally unpack the various intricacies that he'd woven into these gowns, the symbology of tucks and pleats that form stars, the significance of wool and silk to our nation's culture and history.[94] This is material poetics in practice, the complex embedding of meaning in layers, both material and metaphorical, that can be teased out over time and with thoughtfulness. It is what Melinda Smith and I tried to do together, in a very different approach to that of my work with Angela. It was construction rather than deformance, but no less playful.

Be Spoken To was a three-year iterated project that explored institutional culture and language, using print-performed poetry to tease out connection, build links between past and present, and to make a concerted attempt to reach different audiences. In this project, the studio was a conduit to multi-layered story-telling, combining its inherent visual relationship with history with that of institutional and social history.

Melinda had different expectations about collaboration. We were much more segregated in our activities, but also a lot more communicative. While my work with Owen, Louise and Sarah was a mix of 'contributor' and 'secondary' collaboration, and 'conjunctive' collaboration fits closely with the way Angela and I worked, Melinda and I developed a model that Brien and Brady define as 'contributor' collaboration, where each participant works to their own particular skill-set (2003, np). However, (because collaboration is rarely that clear-cut,[95]) we stayed open to the other person participating when the opportunity arose. We discussed every option available to us throughout, and we respected the other's opinions and took action if they wanted to suggest or change something. A lot of this discussion was undertaken via social media (see below).

93 Werner, M. & Bervin, J. 2013. *Emily Dickinson: Gorgeous Nothings*, New York, Christine Bervin/New Directions in association with Granary Books: 10.

94 http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/blueprintforliving/the-ceremony-of-clothes/8272662

95 See also section 1.2: 41-44 for a discussion about modes of collaboration.

Melinda's regimented life makes it difficult to indulge in unstructured play; unless she has an organised residency, she only has intense pockets of time in which to be creative, and they are quite often snatched between duties. Her education included a double degree in Law and Japanese; this focus on language and translation means that she has a particular interest in institutional idioms, and is adept at negotiating legal, political and historical records. We share an interest in voicing and re-voicing text, so we both kept an eye out for possible opportunities to interact with one of the many institutions sited in Canberra.

In 2014 Craft ACT and the Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) jointly released an exhibition/residency call-out inviting artists to respond creatively to particular rooms and objects to form a nested exhibition within an existing permanent exhibition in Old Parliament House (OPH) in Canberra. We successfully tendered for the 'Sign Room', a collection of hand-lettered signs outlining rules, regulations and directions for negotiating the building and its activities. This isolated cluster of vintage wayfinders provided the conceptual framing for our entire three-year project.

The exhibition in question was to be called *Bespoke: Design for the People*. The broad aims of the exhibition brief gave us an interesting starting point: our work, to be on display for a full year, was meant to bring a fresh perspective to a permanent display (*Furnished: Suites, Seats and Suits*) and to engage a broad public audience, many of whom were schoolchildren on excursion, sent as a nation-wide ritual to experience their nation's capital.[96] We wanted to combine our creative writing and visual arts skills in an experimental act of material poetics, and then continue working together to extend and transcreate our ideas in a way that could cross over to our respective poetry and book arts communities[97] so that we had professional outcomes that worked for our respective practices. We planned an artist book, to allow ourselves the freedom to expand our ideas visually, and a poetry chapbook, to showcase Melinda's poetry. Each not only has a different audience but different material opportunities.

60 The MoAD/Craft ACT flyer for the Bespoke exhibition, 2014-15.

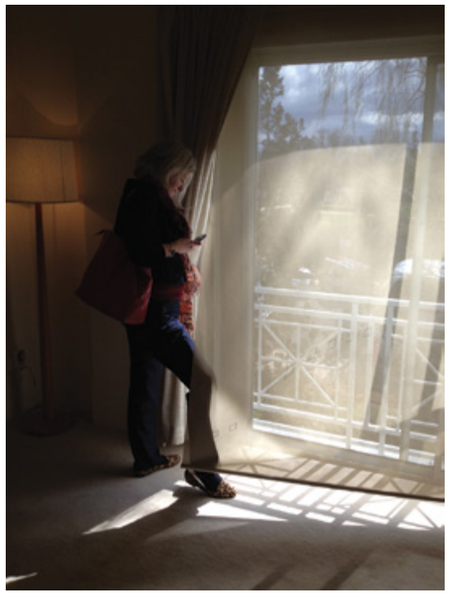
96 This is a Civics education policy initiated by John Howard's government in 2006. Over 100,000 children visit Canberra every year, and there is a rebate for every school child who lives more than 150km from the ACT, on the proviso that certain institutions, including MoAD, are on the itinerary: http://www.pacer.org.au/ (accessed 04/09/2017).

97 *Transcreation*, as explained in section 1.2: 43-44, is a recognition by DeCampos (2007 [1963]) that exact translation is impossible and that each new work is a new creation *based* upon the original; it has been adopted in contemporary commercial industries as 'a strategy to perform all the adjustments necessary to make a campaign work in all the target markets, while at the same time staying loyal to the original creative intent of the campaign' (Pedersen, 2014: 58). Both uses are applicable with this project.

READING THE ROOM

We visited the sign room regularly, and every time we entered, we made new observations. There was a wall-clock up in the corner of the glassed-in space, its hands frozen at 2 to 8; and a sign-clock that cast a shadow resembling the War Memorial (*IMAGE 61*). The gauze curtains behind us muted the long thrown shadows of the window's Union Jack ironwork railings (*IMAGE 62*). The laid-out newspaper from the early-mid-20th century told stories of largeworld events that were already a few days old by the time they were reported, mixed up with local stories of car crashes and regional farm activity. There were cordoning ropes and glass preventing close contact with the objects, and a beautiful stuffed leather chair that we were not permitted to sit on. We took lots of photos, as well as notes.

61 the Sign Room at MoAD



62 Melinda photographing the cast shadows of the ironwork railings at MoAD.

We were not sure at first what to do with the signs. It was also a newspaper-reading room: should we make a book and display it on the purpose-built cabinet? There was a lot of empty wall-space; should we make broadsides? We kept thinking of our first scouting visit, when we'd 'met' the signs and riffed about their various 'personalities', with their different heights, shapes and hand-painted scripts.

The only stipulation made by the exhibition call-out was a responsiveness to the space and its history. We felt that establishing creative constraints would help negotiate the task. Creative constraint does not have to be pre-determined; it can arise as contingency when problem-solving. Once the constraint is recognised and accepted, it can unfurl /unfold into possibility. We worked both ways: we had already factored in the pre-determined constraints of my studio and its equipment but we then identified the site itself as a contributing agent, with its own distinct palette and textual lexicon.

In order to negotiate with the site, we started with a close reading of what the signs themselves were offering. This reading was a generative activity: Melinda transcribed their text, and I parsed their physical features. As Latour recommends, we 'turned … attention on hard things, and [saw] them become gentle, soft, or human' (2012 [1990]:19). They were wooden, varnished in various glossy brown tones, with gold

63 Heads, feet, faces, hands...

and black imperfect lettering, thanks to the hand-painted calligraphy executed by in-house sign-writers. They had page-faces, sturdy feet, and occasionally hands (manicules: hand symbols with pointing fingers), which evoked *personhood* (*IMAGE 63*). They were a network of preserved knowledge, their texts in conversation with each other but set apart from us by glass and time. We wanted to set them back into the thoroughfares, allow them to connect with the present, if only through our pages.

Moving outwards, to work with the material significations of the environment, we thought about the nature of the OPH building itself, completed in 1927 and the seat of government until 1988: solid (*dependable*), white (*pure*) with pared-down geometric 'stripped classical' elements (*ordered*) that deliberately evoked the British Empire's Union Jack (*authority*) and solid, furnishings of wood and leather (*masculine*). We decided that these elements should be used as a visual palette.

After a few brainstorms, Melinda tried some word play using only the transcribed text. She cut, rearranged, and rebuilt to create a corresponding cluster of words in poetic dialogue with the originals, re-contextualising their messages into absurd commands with wry pokes at the aura of authority and entitlement projected from the original signs. It was very focused on generating meaning that drew the reader back to the objects, unlike the almost asemic way that Angela worked to keep her text subsumed in the poetics of the process. Melinda and I wanted to re-site the language we were encountering within this institution by turning the words around.

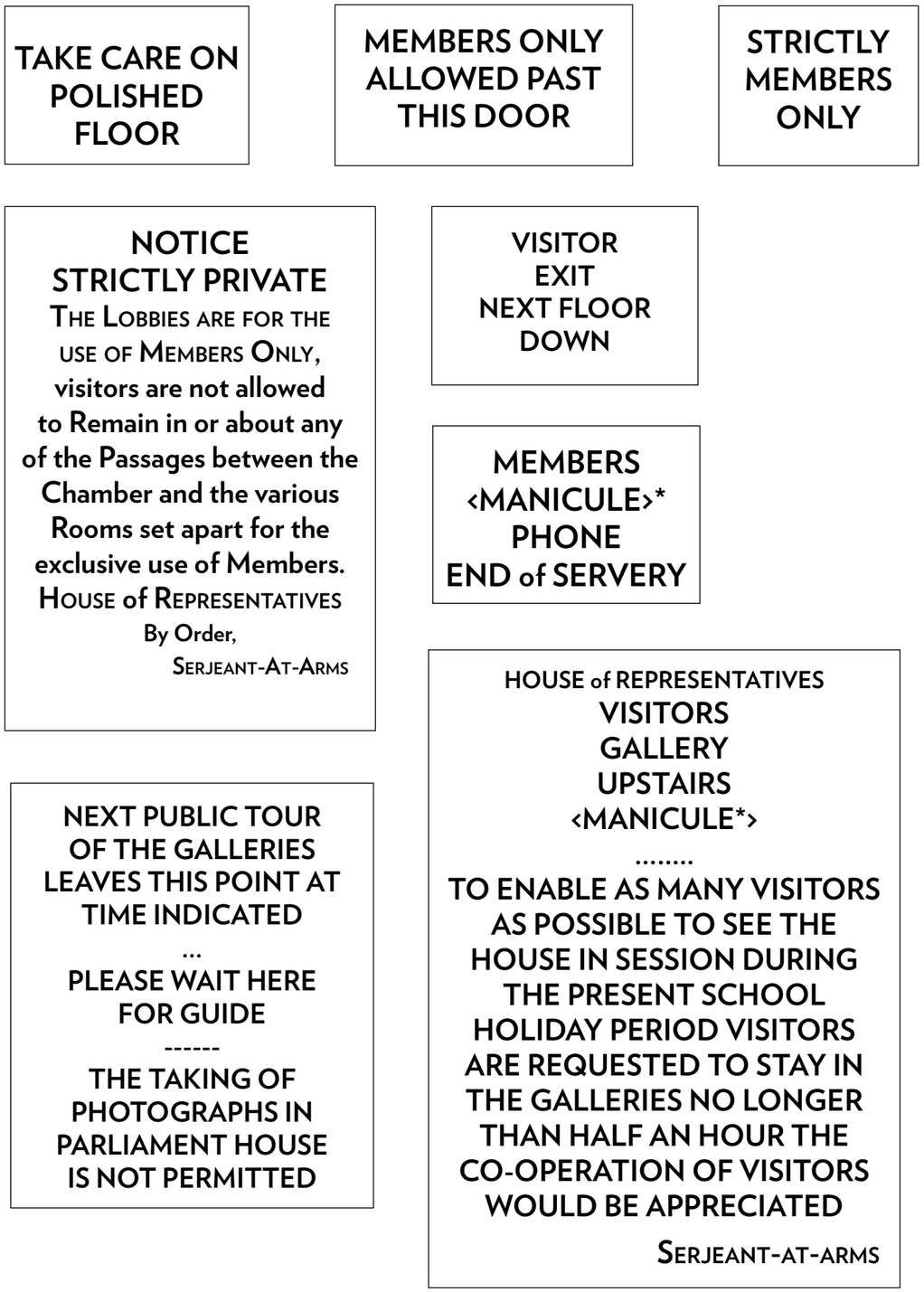
Melinda: *My first response was to consider the text of the signs themselves* (*IMAGE 64*).

With its somewhat hectoring tone and its authoritative stance (which, however contested and contingent in reality, had a deeply vested interest in appearing to speak from a place of stability and right) this material seemed ripe for a bit of situationist-style **détournement**.[98] *In art discourse terms, this détournement impulse came from a wish to engage with and critique the psycho-geography of an authoritative space – in this case both a parliament and a museum.*

This drove my decision to cut up the original text and use it to 'speak back' to the original signs in terms which might be seen to gently question that authority. We were, after all, working in the context of a parliament building (from parlement*; Old French; 'speaking'), a place for debate, discussion and occasionally protest. Re-using the text in this way would problematise it in a way similar to the photographs of Matt Siber (Goldsmith, 2011: 44-51).*

My aim was to produce accessible work that engaged in a critical way with the text and context of the originals, by exploring categories such as 'representatives', 'members' and 'visitors', and by drawing attention to the ultimately temporary nature of political and even physical structures.

98 For a discussion of situationist techniques, see Goldsmith, Kenneth, *Uncreative Writing* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2011), 36-51.



64 sign transcript (Melinda's formatting in Word).

* A manicule is an old-fashioned pointing hand symbol (☞), two of which appeared on the original signs.

Here are some examples:[99]

ONLY about HALF THE PUBLIC ARE APPRECIATED
TAKE NO NOTICE
Members ARE ONLY REPRESENTATIVES
REPRESENTATIVES are STRICTLY VISITORS

And

GALLERIES *of* the set apart
ONLY THE ALLOWED
ONLY THE PERMITTED
Only in THIS HOUSE
NOT THE NEXT

This method of 'found writing' is what Goldmith calls 'uncreative writing' (2011): we used the words *in* the space, *about* the space, to generate a new work that encourages the reader to think about the original language. Goldsmith's basic thesis is that no matter the source of the text, the borrowing author retains a powerful capacity for *choice* in how that text is managed, parsed, organized and distributed; these decisions are what makes the writing creative and distinctive (2011: 9).[100] We used a very basic form of this methodology at this point, but later, with the next iteration, Melinda expanded her approach, and it became much more nuanced.

Being in the space together discussing our joint and individual reactions felt radical, democratic. The fact that we were experiencing this together as a unit subverted the traditional writer/printer relationship: this was not a straightforward transaction of a body of writing delivered to be published: we experienced the space of compositional interest together, both of us forming ideas and concepts that could be merged and collaboratively negotiated.

Be Spoken To, we agreed, needed to be accessible to its broad audience, many of whom might not be interested in formal poetry. We both believe in the efficacy of humour and play as a strategy for reception, and we decided that the anthropomorphism we were feeling was an entry point. The original signs had distinct personalities, from didactic to quirky, and their presentation in a contained, spot-lit room had its own affect: there were evocative thrown shadows (*threat*) and implied conversations between the objects

99 The texts used in the installation and many of the extra sign texts are included in the full MS of 1962: BST, Appendix 4: 222-237.

100 At the time that Melinda and I were reading Goldsmith, he was not a popular name to quote after an incident where he had pushed his found poetry methodology over a sticky ethical line (http://hyperallergic.com/190954/kenneth-goldsmith-remixes-michael-brown-autopsy-report-as-poetry/ (accessed 04/09/2017)). Nevertheless, his pedagogical and compositional methodologies remain useful; I am reminded of the ripples in the typography community when it was revealed that iconic designer Eric Gill had been committed to a life of broad sexual experimentation, which included wearing no underwear under his loose smock (in the 1920s), and sleeping with his sister, two of his daughters and his dog. Yet Gill remains one of the most enduring typefaces in use today (MacCarthy, 1989).

(*conspiracy*). We liked the idea of exploring *dialogue*: the signs were to mirror themselves, with one set (*official*) behind the protection of glass and another (*the people*) standing in public space, facing them, evoking the social history of the building (*government/function*) and converting that government message (*unity/one nation*) into polysemic response (*debate/democracy/dissent*).

Melinda: *At one stage we toyed with the idea of making the new signs in vibrant colours on a white background, making them look more the signs you might see at a public protest, in keeping with their conception as a 'challenge to authority'. This would have set up a vivid contrast with the originals and highlighted visually the difference between the two groups of signs. However in the end my preference was for the new signs to be slightly more 'under the radar' and subversive; for them to look similar to the originals from a distance, but for them to unfold, on closer inspection, as puzzling, intriguing and even unsettling echoes.*

Happily the MoAD staff were open to our idea, and we were able to go together to the MoAD archives to find some unused sign-stands.[101] We selected a variety of original 'retired' signs (*IMAGE 65*) for which I letterpress-printed new page-faces using hand-set wood type (*wood*) in black ink (*authority*) with sections of embossing powder highlights (*gold*) on brown paper (*historical tone*). I wanted to use only what was in my studio, another enclosed room with objects that related to each other as a network of distributed knowledge: the press, type, paper and ink (*press gallery*), my time setting up each letter, cutting the paper, applying the gold embellishment (*labour/value*). At one point during the initial experimental printing I realised that we could use the black ink and gold foiling powder intermittently to further play with the textual reading, a playful mark-up of key words enthusiastically implemented by Melinda (*IMAGE 66*).

Melinda: *Once the texts had been finalised, a number of paratextual decisions remained to be made. This is of course where incorporating a poem in an artwork differs significantly from traditional page-centric poetry publishing. On the page, once line breaks, page breaks, indents, use of white space, capitalisation, punctuation and any italics have been settled on, there is little else to decide about the material form the poem will take. However in this case we had to agree between us questions such as the font(s) and sizes to use, and the shape and orientation of each sign–face.*

Most crucially, within the two-colour scheme for printing, we had to decide which words would be gold and which black. In a sense for me this felt like 'front end loading' the interpretative process – usually left up to the reader – of deciding where the emphasis falls, and it also made it more difficult to leave text open to multiple interpretations. It was however an interesting and challenging aspect of our collaboration that forced me to reflect on how this

101 This is where we discovered 'ghost bags,' the simply-constructed and haunting white Tyvek slipcovers that the staff use to protect archived objects from dust and damage (*IMAGE 65*).

65 signs in the MoAD archive, wrapped in 'ghostbags' of white Tyvek with blue masking tape and images of the contents stuck on the outside. Above is a floor-level sign that we used for the text 'Please notice leaves on the floor'.

66 Production images from the studio, testing the gold embossing powder and the intricacies of specific placement vs total coverage. Cheap brown paper was used at this step, with the final prints made on better quality (vintage) stock from a long-stored roll discovered at the university.

67 MoAD conservation staff carefully installing the new sign-faces, using perspex which had to be custom-cut for each individual sign.

68 official MoAD photos of the sign installation.

Photo: Mark Nolan

69 the floor sign, too low to include in the official photos.

Photo: Melinda Smith

> *work normally takes place in the reading of a poem and how the effort is usually distributed between poet and reader. In the end I embraced the chance to 'mark up' the text in this additional way.*

In response to Melinda's reaction to the black and gold, I agree that much of the visual work I do with poetry is indeed 'front end loading'. It is a different approach to that of presenting poetry 'beautifully' for the reader. It is also more complex than conventional illustrative presentation, and closer to Thierry Bouchard's 'ambiguous relation' (1994: 18) where the applied bibliographic code provides not only an entry point to the text's imbedded meaning, but also augments the idea. For this stage of the project, with the aim of broadening readership, increased visual accessibility is important, especially when the objects are clustered in a public walkway, vying for attention. Later, I decided that the black/gold mark-up was unnecessary in page-space, where more time could be spent with individual page texts, and omitted it.

The resulting exhibition work was slyly subversive, a sign cluster of institutional actants that felt like a small crowd of varying heights, weights and ages facing off the authority of the originals and their attendant historical contexts (*IMAGES 67-69*). They seemed to represent the 'ordinary' people, having their own say: poetic, philosophical and 'bolshie', but avoiding the 'elitist' concept of poetry that seems to dog the genre.

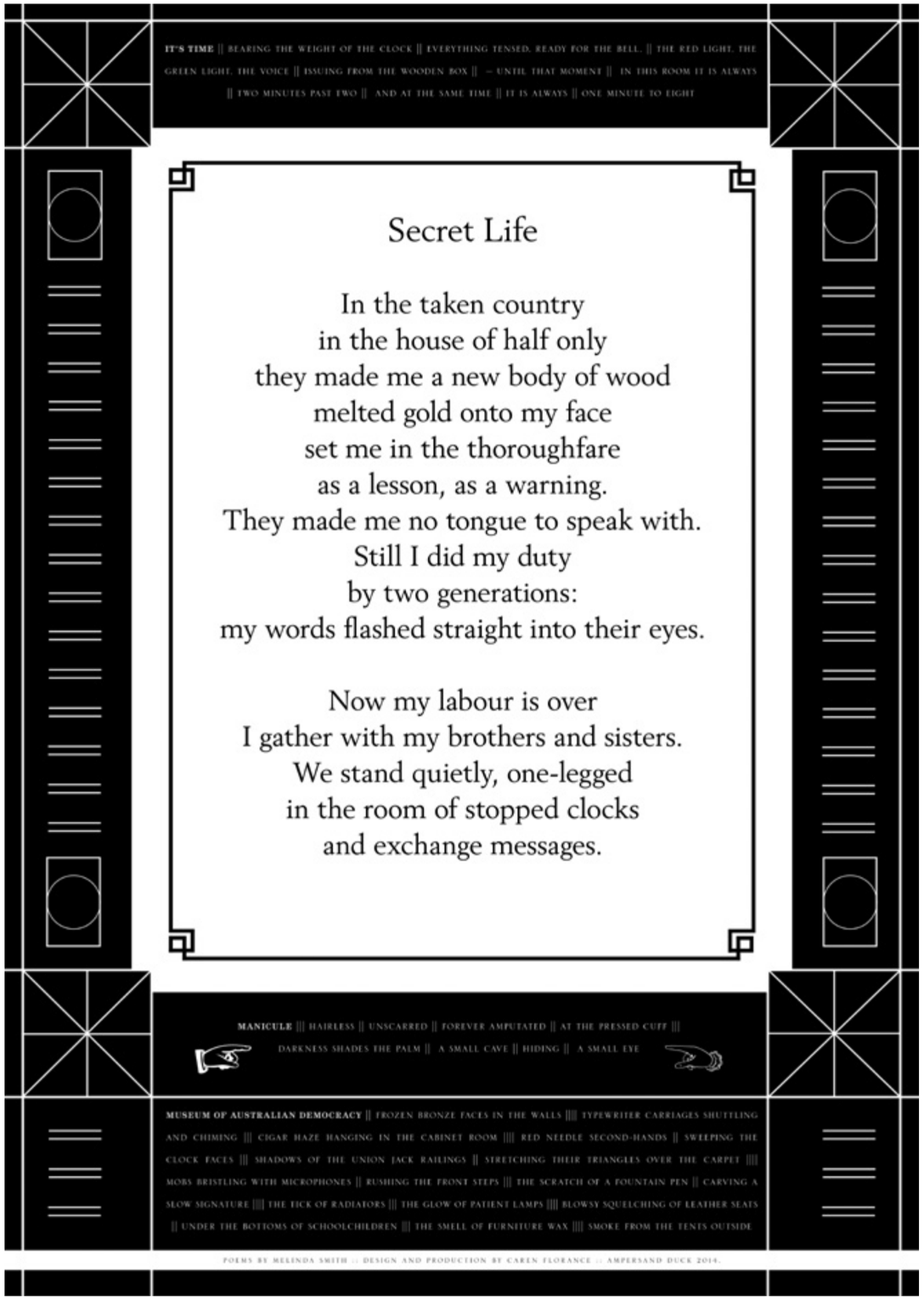
> **Melinda:** *Finally, at installation time, we had to agree on the placement and grouping of the signs. This is by contrast with a traditional poetry collection, where the reader's interaction with the work is straight front-to-back navigation through a codex, and the main consideration is ordering the poems within the codex in a way that makes literary sense. With a three-dimensional installation, each poem relates not just to the one 'before' and the one 'after' but the one 'behind', 'in front', 'above' and 'below'. In addition to considering literary interactions of the groups of words, we also had to use aesthetic / design criteria to arrive at an acceptable combination of physical symmetry and variety.*

This experience of relational placement carried through to our conversations about the possibilities of the artist book, which can defy and extend 'conventional' methods of presentation (see below).

On the wall, so subtly designed to fit the OPH setting that it was perhaps over-looked, we included a large digitally-printed and framed poetry broadside, featuring four original poems by Melinda about the signs and the building (*IMAGES 70-71*).[102]

> **Melinda:** *Another aspect of my creative response, inspired by the look of the signs (with their legs, feet and faces) and the way they were grouped and displayed, was to imagine them as beings with consciousness and inner lives. This resulted in the poem 'Secret Life', which took its title and some of its atmosphere and structure from ACT region poet*

102 Included in Appendix 4: 222-23, marked with a manicule. These were included in the artist book preface section.



70 Melinda Smith and Caren Florance, *Secret Life*, 2014. Digital broadside on archival photo paper. 594 x 420mm, edition of 5.

David Campbell's, 'The Secret Life of a Leader' *(1979: 73-4) – a poem engaged with the politics of the 20th century, especially totalitarianism, but seeking to explore it via a personal dimension; it is framed as a dramatic monologue. My own poem became a dramatic monologue in the voice of a sign, reflecting on its 'life' and evoking the small and large violences often perpetrated on citizens in the service of a state. 'Secret Life' was one of four original poems composed for* Be Spoken To *which Caren printed as one composite broadside, replete with design motifs used throughout the Old Parliament House building.*

A further response I had to the signs was curiosity and delight at some of their material aspects – their use of the 'stripped classical' architectural vocabulary, the idiosyncracies of their lettering style, and the period details such as the use of miniature 'pointing hand' symbols. When Caren informed me the technical term for these was 'manicule', it inspired the poem of the same name which was also included in the broadside.

The inclusion of a clock face in one of the signs, and the fact that the original group of signs was displayed directly under one of the old Division clocks used to call members to votes on the floor of the chamber, inspired the fourth broadside poem, 'It's Time', with its title punning on the 1972 election slogan of Gough Whitlam's Labor Party.

I wanted to include these original poems but installing four works on the wall would have distracted from the signs; making one print with four pieces of text was a challenge that I tackled by working out a system of line-break notation: a single vertical dash (|) for a line-break and a double dash (||) for a stanza break. The dashes themselves echoed the line-work that populates the 'stripped classical' design elements embedded in OPH by designer John Smith Murdoch, elements I re-created for the broadside and books.[103]

71 In situ shot of *Secret Life*, 2014, with Melinda and I for scale. Taken at the Bespoke opening.

103 John Smith Murdoch: https://www.moadoph.gov.au/collection/the-building/design-and-construction/ (accessed 04/09/2017).

72 The ghostbag for *1962: Be Spoken To* (2014-17).
Archival Tyvek, blue masking tape, velcro, photo, machine-stitched.

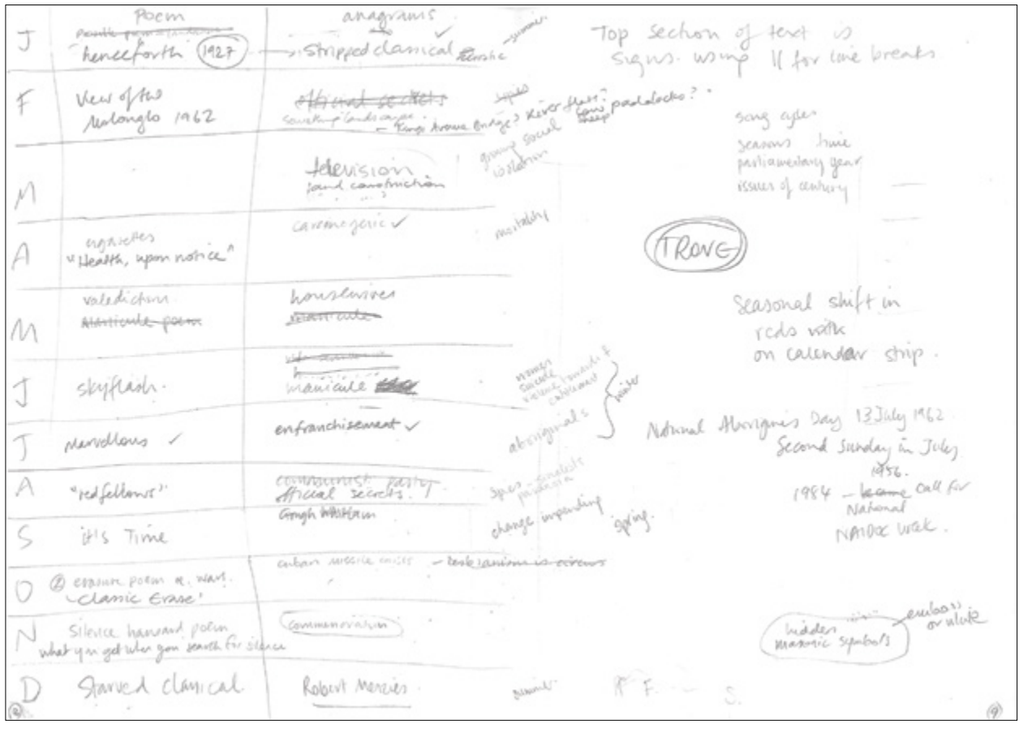
1962: BE SPOKEN TO: PLANNING THE BOOK

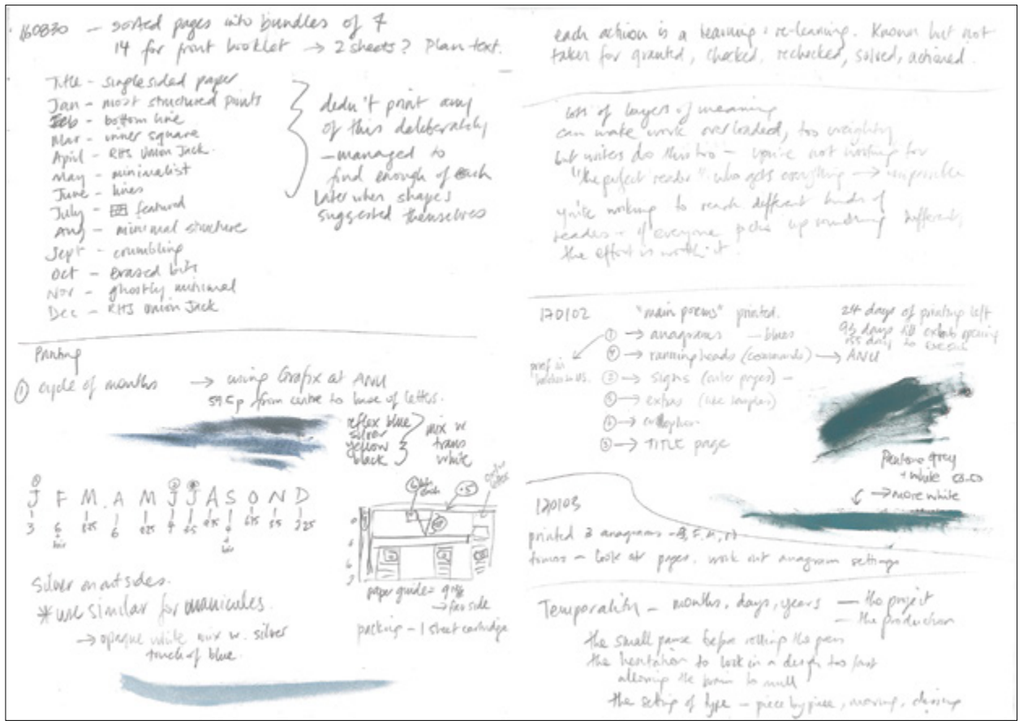
The initial plan to expand our project to different publishing formats was a recognition that we wanted to use this opportunity to imbed social and political commentary into our response to the site. The MoAD residency generated a lot of ideas and texts for us, but we were wary of using some of them in the public exhibition because we thought some of our texts were a bit too politically pointed for that particular situation: I am not adverse to a good political punch,[104] but Melinda was at that time a public servant and there are (increasingly) strict rules about their expression of partisan opinion.[105] Shifting these ideas to an artist book space made them simultaneously less accessible but more articulate, especially if the book were to become part of an institutional collection.[106] By the time we started working on the books, Melinda had been liberated to write professionally by winning the Prime Minister's Literary Award in 2014.[107]

Melinda is extremely productive, and the 'uncreative writing' process was exciting for both of us. We had a variety of texts: original responsive poems, the recycled sign texts that had been used in the installation plus others that hadn't, lists of computer-generated anagrams from words and phrases that had caught our eyes, and tentative ideas for further writings. The way we planned to work was to hand-print a tabloid-sized book, reminiscent of the newspapers we had browsed in the reading room near the signs, using the affordances of the letterpress studio as a design constraint to pull together these words in a print-performed, theatrical manner. It was to be a much more mediated and designed poetry production than that of *Working Papers*, and we would tread a fine line between fine press and the artist book.

There are tacit rules to bespoke methods of poetry publishing; the only printed expression of the 'rules' that I have found were hand-printed as a fine press book called *Printing Poetry*, by Clifford Burke (1980). Even he has trouble being definitive, acknowledging that every poem and its setting needs individual attention. He frames the printer's responsibility towards the reader and the text as *response-ability*, the ability to respond appropriately, to become familiar with the text before working with it (54). 'While reading a manuscript,' he says, I try to see it in type in my mind's eye, the way some people see the stage while reading a play' (55). By saying this, he is implying that there are decisions to be made akin to stagecraft: sets, costumes, props, music, movement. For him these are things like paper choices, framing paratexts, ink colour, justification:

104 See http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/182914972?selectedversion=NBD51766462 (accessed 04/09/2017).
105 Melinda: "Under the Public Service Code of Conduct I could not be seen to publicly criticise current government policy, at the risk of loss of employment and / or more drastic sanctions. Constraining myself to use only the words present on the original signs meant that I could be partly insulated against any adverse interpretations of my new 'messages', however applicable to contemporary debates they might end up being." At time of writing, the PSCC was being tightened: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-07/facebook-liking-anti-government-posts-could-cost-public-service/8780660 (accessed 04/09/2017).
106 Both the artist book and chapbook were acquired by the National Library of Australia during the Reading Spaces exhibition.
107 Worth $80,000: https://www.arts.gov.au/pm-literary-awards/current-awards (accessed 04/09/2017).

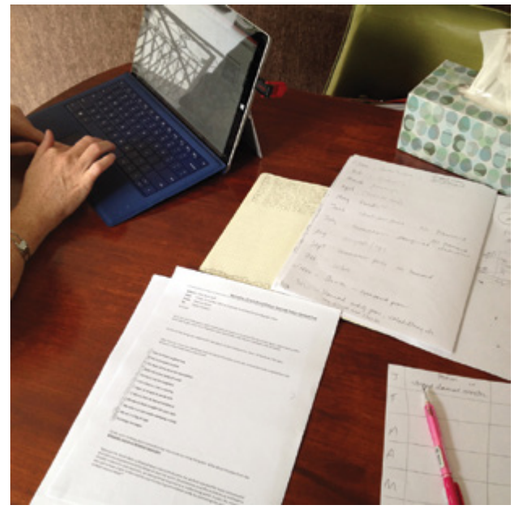




73 Two notebook spreads from our process. The top is from the first gathering of content, the bottom is during studio process.

bibliographic code. However, for all his hesitations, towards the end he says (echoing the institutional mindset that we encountered in the MoAD signs): 'Much as a printer strives for some unique or individual expression in a book, it must be remembered that there are rules limiting gross individualism, rules imposed by no authority but function' (82).

The contumacious culture of the artist book has shown no such revulsion against 'gross individualism'; to the contrary, every challenge thrown up by the rise of the internet has been met by taking the book beyond its traditional boundaries. Text and image intertwine, battle, submit to or conquer each other on the stage of the book; indeed, as Phillip Cabau writes, 'The artist's book is not so much an alternative to a margin of the mainstream as it is a transversality between streams' (2014: 8). Melinda and I went into the making of this book knowing that we would have fun with it, that while we wanted to work with a wide variety of texts, we would do so with a singularity of vision and visual design, constructing a narrative of single purpose rather than an anthology of separate poems, and this is what would encourage it to be seen as an artist book.



74 Melinda on laptop, me with pencil and paper.

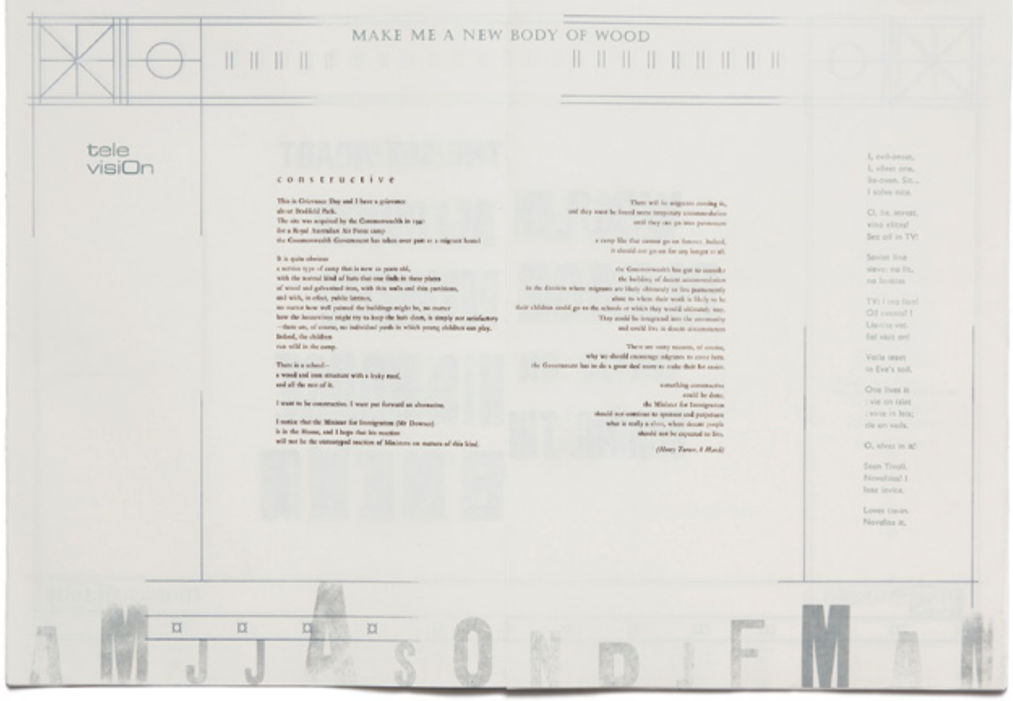
We spent a few intensive days sitting together with endless cups of tea, laptops, paper and pencils, building the structure of the book (*IMAGES 73-74*). My notes say things like 'each spread is a month/command'; 'axis of symmetry = page fold'; 'MS to explore a year of Hansard'. Another note says:

> CF: Artist books are usually one sustained idea => one poem, one text running through with many visual extensions. Johanna Drucker and Emily McVarish are exceptions.[108] This is many poems sustaining many ideas => one cycle => the book is the unifying factor. Need to ground it in a parliamentary year => the life of the building.

Melinda trawled through Hansard and Trove[109] while I made rough sketches and lists. Somewhere in that day's conversation, we chose 1962.

108 See section 2.1: 68-70.

109 Trove is an invaluable Australian search engine uniting data from libraries, museums, archives and other research organisations. It is independent and maintained by the National Library of Australia. 'Trove is many things: a community, a set of services, an aggregation of metadata, and a growing repository of fulltext digital resources.' While we were building the book, funding to Trove was slashed, so we printed #fundtrove in the book to (a) help raise support and (b) preserve that historical moment. http://trove.nla.gov.au/



75 (*above*): December's sign text, one of the unused extras from the exhibition.

76 (*below*): March: Construction / Television / Make me a new body of wood.

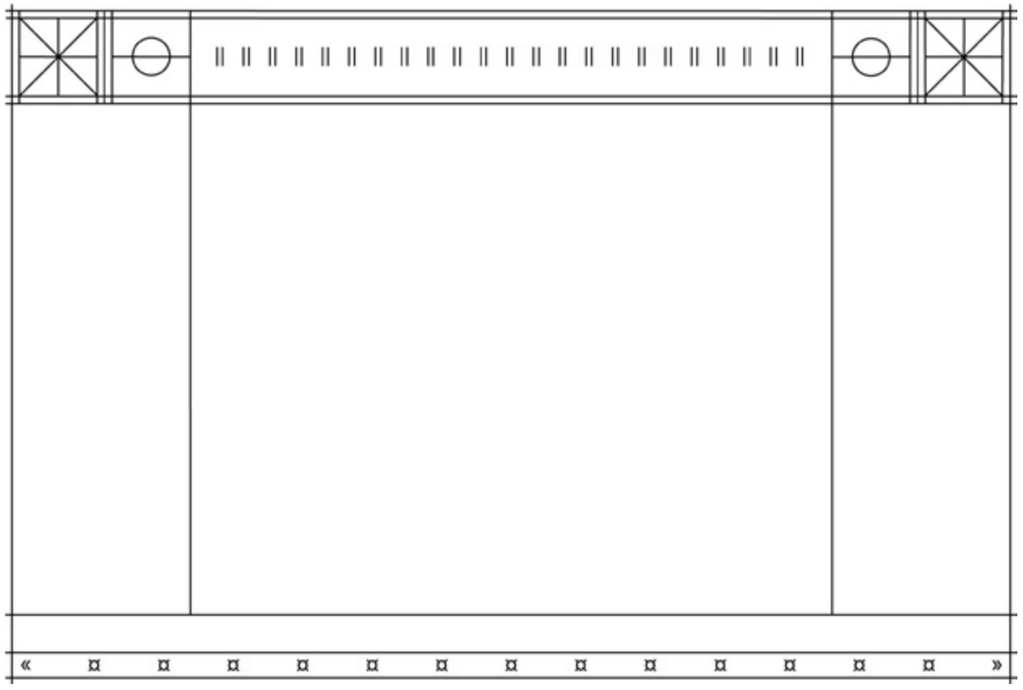
Photos: Brenton McGeachie.

> **Melinda:** *In the end we took the idea to its logical conclusion and decided to use a* particular year *as a window on the life of the building and as a framework for eavesdropping on its voices. We agreed we should avoid big, controversial years like 1975. We thought perhaps an unremarkable year in the middle of the Menzies era might work. We finally chose 1962 because in that year indigenous Australians were first granted the right to vote in Federal Elections regardless of their home state – in other words the parliament became, for the first time, (theoretically) capable of representing all Australians* (*Canberra Times*, 1962).

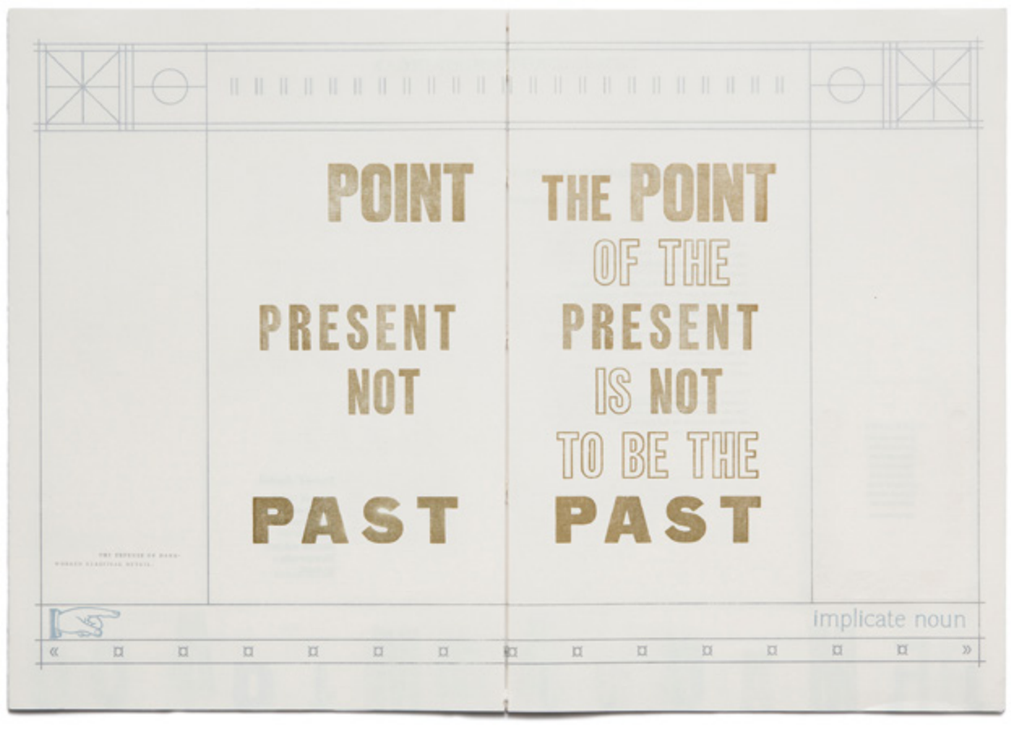
Once we had a temporal anchor, we brainstormed entry points. Dividing the book into twelve months allowed the reader to move through the year by turning the pages. We wanted to create a poetic snapshot of 1962 that also crossed the boundary to our own time. In a word file containing earlier ideas, we rediscovered the phrase 'slip me from my ghost bag', an idea stemming from the experience of encountering the Museum's archival storage unit. It would introduce the notion of ghosts coming back to haunt, and invited the reader to be active: to pull forth and explore the object. We liked the idea of multiple voices speaking through the book, threaded by form, font and placement. One of those threads would be the eight *Be Spoken To* sign texts, ushering the reader through the 'rooms' (and adding four of the extras, to make up twelve) (*IMAGE 73*). Another thread was a series of 'commands' or situation statements, royally seated at the head of the centrespreads of each pagefold, as if carved in stone. They were mostly gleaned from the broadside's *Secret Life* poem (*IMAGES 70-71*). The twelve lines used were also tied to the monthly themes and dates that we mapped out:

January: THIS IS STRIPPED CLASSICAL (architecture/*OPH opening*)
February: STAND ON THE TAKEN COUNTRY (landscape)
March: MAKE ME A NEW BODY OF WOOD (society/construction)
April: THE FACES OF THE DEAD ARE EVERYWHERE (health/*ANZAC day*)
May: SET ME IN THE THOROUGHFARE (women/feminism)
June: I AM A LESSON, I AM A WARNING (media) (*IMAGE 78*)
July: I DID MY DUTY BY GENERATIONS (indigenous affairs)
August: EXCHANGE MESSAGES (Communism)
September: MY WORDS FLASH STRAIGHT INTO THEIR EYES (political change)
October: TIME IS A RED NEEDLE SWEEPING A CIRCLE (national threat/ *Cuban Missile Crisis*)
November: I HAVE NO TONGUE TO SPEAK WITH (commemoration/grief)
December: MY AIR IS A FUG OF CIGAR (masculinity/entrenched power)

We thought about ways to perform the year through pagespace. Having already come up with the idea of somehow reflecting the number of parliamentary sitting days for each month, Melinda researched the numbers for 1962 and we sketched a little graph that looked like a weirdly erratic heartbeat. Because I constantly try to think of ways to use typography instead of imagery, I worked out a data visualisation system, with the size of each month's initial reflecting the number of sitting days against 'graph' lines that formed the base of our architectural page frame. The largest sitting month was August, with



77 the framework design used for the screenprinting.



78 The front and back pages of the 12-month book cycle, connecting up when laid flat.

Photo: Brenton McGeachie.

January, June, July and September having no sitting days. The parliamentary sitting calendar became our book's (arrhythmic) heartbeat, but it meant that our commitment to using Hansard for the whole year hit a snag, so we decided that if we had a month that had no Hansard, we turned to newspapers, via Trove.

We wanted each month to correspond to a command, and the command to tie in with an event or political issue. Melinda searched for ideas with key words that we had brainstormed, some of them quite vague (*architecture*), others focusing on key dates in the month, like Armistice Day and ANZAC Day. Ostensibly an undramatic choice as opposed to an iconic year like 1927 (the year OPH was opened) or 1975 (the Dismissal), 1962 turned out to be very interesting. While Robert Menzies was solidly in power, we found Gough Whitlam building up steam as the Opposition Leader and the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Communist Party affecting the cigar-fugged calm. Canberra itself was transforming from a town in a paddock to a city with a lake.[110]

> It is highly significant that readers of books move from recto to verso, that their field of awareness continually shifts from page to 'opening' (i.e., the space made by a facing verso/recto), and that the size of the book – length, breadth and thickness – help to determine our reader's perceptions at every point. (McGann, 2004: 153)

In this work Piper's emphasis on the manual 'fold and turn' of the page (2012: 522) was again an important consideration. Book artist Dick Higgins says that 'Every time we turn the page, the previous page passes into our past and we are confronted by a new world' (1996: 103). This echoes the movement through a conventional poetry book, in which each page holds a poem that is an encapsulated world. With *1962: Be Spoken To* (*1962 BST*) we heightened this sense of movement through space: the book makes use of recognisable elements from Murdoch's design to situate the book-object as the Old Parliament House itself. We choreographed each turn of the page to enact a movement in and out of framed rooms, achieved by screenprinting a linework structure on both sides of each page, based on Murdoch's decorative elements, with slight tweaks. The bottom three lines are measured proportionally to my wood type so that the months can proportionally represent the sitting days; the squares in the top corners echo the ironwork railings at OPH, with a slight horizontal addition to evoke the Aboriginal flag (*IMAGE 77*). It is printed cleanly and intact on the outer surfaces of the pagefold to frame the sign-text, and in a more fragmented way for the inner *openings* (the bibliographic term for a pagespread) that form rooms (*Italian: stanza*) which hover in time and place, populated by textblocks that are both human (*stories*) and furniture (*letterpress term for spacing*).

1962 BST has two parts: 12 sections simply thread-stitched to form a light binding (to allow it to be read as a complete cycle without a formal cover impeding the movement from the end back to the beginning, see *IMAGE 78*), and a separate title/colophon

110 Or, as I like to say, from a town in a paddock to a city in a paddock.

booklet. Each section is a month, a room, and a theme that draws from public concerns found in our sources (*IMAGE 73*). All operate separately but intertwine.

MELINDA ON REVOICING THE PAST

Melinda: *During our discussion we also agreed that it would make sense to compose any new poems for the artist's book by rearranging existing text in some way, in keeping with the technique used for the exhibition. At that moment it suddenly became obvious that the best repository of existing text was Hansard, the official record of every word spoken in both chambers of Parliament. From there it became a simple (if time consuming) matter to search the Hansard for 1962 for likely speeches to mine for found poems.*

It is worth pausing here [to let me] say a few things about our use of Hansard.

Hansard is a very special kind of text: an archive comprised mostly of direct speech. It is speech for official purposes, but this of course is part of the reason for making it into poetry. It is speech of the same flavour as the court transcripts used by Charles Reznikoff[111] *and more recently the legal documents used by Vanessa Place in her* Statement of Facts,[112] *but it also has a greater range of subject matter. Like Reznikoff there is a historical dimension too, in our use of Hansard from a generation ago (rather than contemporary verbatim documents such as Place uses). Poems made from Hansard draw their resonance primarily from the fact that they are made of the direct speech of elected representatives of our polity, addressing the reader out of the past as if through some ghostly radio set.*[113]

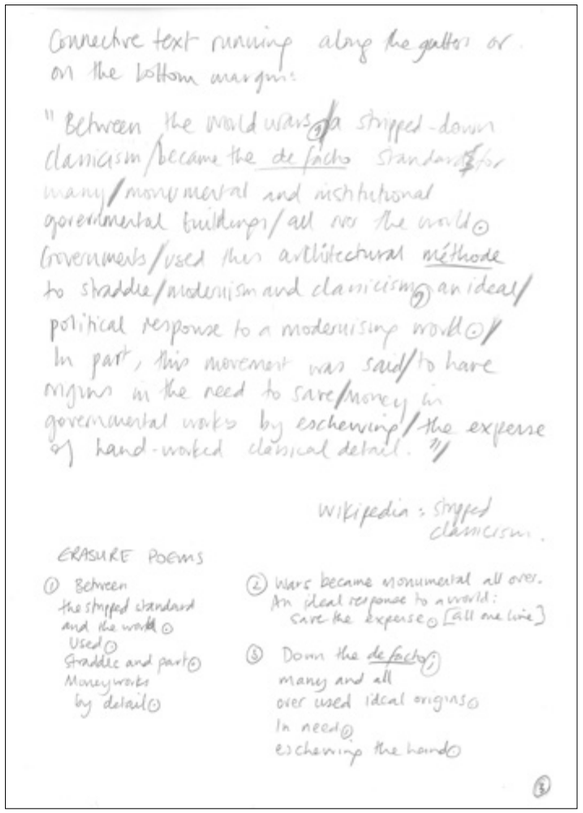
If uncreative writing is 'self-reflexive use of appropriated language' (Goldsmith, 2011: 101) then a Hansard found poem or erasure poem is a species of uncreative writing. So too are the other elements we used to fill the 'rooms' of the book (discussed further below): found poems made from contemporary newspaper articles and poems made from anagrams of evocative phrases.

Goldsmith characterises two approaches to appropriated text: Picasso's candle (making a unified whole from collaged elements) and Duchamp's mirror (presenting the appropriated content without comment and 'throwing it back onto the thinkership (audience)' to come up with their own response) (101). The approach taken to Hansard in the 1962: Be Spoken To *poems is more akin to the mirror than the candle, although it arguably has elements of both. See below in the 'Redfellows' case study for more discussion of this point.*

111 *Testimony: The United States (1885-1915) – Recitative*, which used verbatim witness testimony from court cases during the period reframed as poems. Reznikoff became the best known representative of the Objectivist school who all employed similar techniques. See Goldsmith 2011: 105–108.

112 Like Reznikoff and the Objectivists, Vanessa Place has also reframed legal documents as literature – in her case, statements of facts from court cases she works on in her day job defending sex offenders. Unlike Reznikoff's witness testimony and Hansard, these are not direct speech, but objective-sounding, narrative-like legalese.

113 Radio was already established as a medium by the time the building opened in 1927, and in fact the opening ceremony on 9 May 1927 was broadcast on 'the modern wonder of wireless' (*The Mercury*, 10 May 1927: http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/29672453 (accessed 4/8/2017)).


Connective text running along the gutter or on the bottom margin:

" Between the world wars a stripped-down classicism became the de facto standard for many monumental and institutional governmental buildings all over the world. Governments used this architectural méthode to straddle modernism and classicism, an ideal political response to a modernising world. In part, this movement was said to have origins in the need to save money in governmental works by eschewing the expense of hand-worked classical detail. "

Wikipedia : stripped classicism.

ERASURE POEMS

① Between the stripped standard and the world Used Straddle and part Money works by detail

② Wars became monumental all over. An ideal response to a world: save the expense [all one line]

③ Down the de facto many and all over used ideal origins In need eschewing the hand

79 A page of the project notebook, working out the distribution of the Wikipedia entry.

The process of searching for text strings in Hansard also inspired its own creative response: for the November 1962 spread I composed a ***flarf****-style poem (2011: 185-187) made up of Hansard search results ('what you get when you search for silence'.)*

As a final couple of unifying elements for readers to follow throughout the book, we used found text: a full, unedited quote from the Wikipedia article on stripped classical design (IMAGE 79), spread over several pages, and anagrams of the phrase 'manicule point' (IMAGE 81). Caren's contribution to the work became textual as well as artistic here: once I had generated and selected my favourite anagrams of 'manicule point', it was Caren who selected which 'manicule point' anagram to use with each month, resulting in fortuitous groupings like 'a nicotine lump' to go with the Health-themed month (March 1962) and its Hansard poem 'Health, On Notice' taken from a House of Representatives question to the Health Minister about the effects of smoking (the anagram poem for that month is 'Carcinogenic') (IMAGE 76).

In the way it is constructed, it is worth noting that 1962: Be Spoken To *contains narratives of a number of different kinds: cyclical narratives (the regular reappearance of taglines and sign text), self-contained narratives (individual poems), and connected run-on narratives (such as the found Wikipedia text [which is separated into clusters of words that are spread sequentially through the pages]), all located within the constructed episodic*

space of the 12-spread book which simultaneously represents time (the 12 months of 1962) and space (Old Parliament House itself).

At a practical level, this design of interweaving narratives meant we had created quite a complex and voluminous project for ourselves. We both ended up using a kind of matrix structure to conceptually organise and relate all the different elements and also to track when each had been completed.

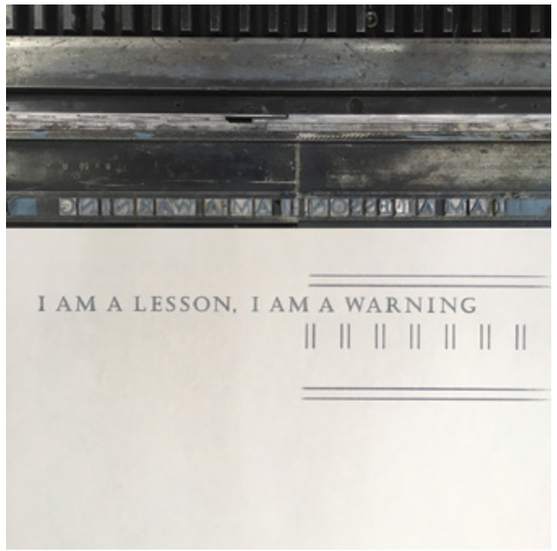
CAREN ON RESTAGING THE VOICES

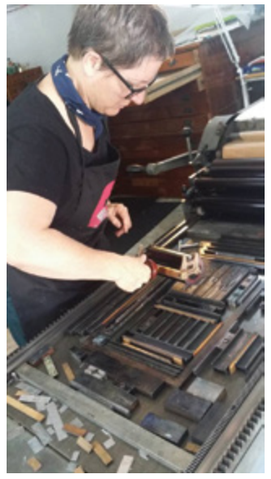
While the writing was undertaken by Melinda, our ostensibly delineated 'contributor' collaboration had again been subverted by this period of structural composition. Once we had a plan, it was time for me to go into the studio once again, to explore what it had to contribute and to negotiate with its particular material demands.

The screenprinted frame (*image 77*) not only created an architectural metaphor for the book, but carved out a number of distinct spaces for each page opening: the central 'hall', two side 'wings' and the head and tail of the spread. The various styles of text had specific locations within the 'building', and were given specific graphic qualities in terms of font, font size and colour. To maintain the sense that all the content was historical, retrieved and shifted to the subjective from the official, no black ink was used. Shades of brown, blue and a rich gold enhanced the sense of temporality. The 'framing' texts – the commands, the anagram poems, the wiki lines – were printed in the same blues and blue-greys as the framework lines, positing them as part of the fabric of the building. The gold was used for the sign texts, echoing their gold paint.

One of the advantages of the studio's constraint is that all the equipment dates from no later than the late 1960s: all the type is an authentic 'witness' to the time period. The typefaces in my studio are a vocabulary that can play with time, place and voice, but they are also limited to the small selection of sizes available to me. If I want to use a specific font, it needs to have a 'tonal range' that complements all my other choices, and I may only have one drawer of it, in a very small or very large size (see *IMAGE 84*). Suffice to say, there was a lot of experimentation and research undertaken in the printing phase to realise the effects that we desired. If I had used computer-generated photopolymer plate, the outcome could have been easier/faster/more accurate in terms of typographical connection, but my close reading/reaction time would have been shorter, and perhaps shallower. While constraint simplifies, it also complicates, and demands a more intensive degree of problem-solving.

The feature poems for each month were all set in the same font, a bureaucratic Garamond English, and printed in a sepia brown, like the wood of the OPH signs. Each layout was bespoke, partly determined by Melinda's use of form, but also by thinking about how the ideas might be reinforced by the occupation of the central 'hall' space. Turning 'View of the Molonglo 1962' into a river might seem obvious, but when the point of the poem is that the river was blocked in the service of a non-existent lake, it helps to belabour the point by ghosting the river. Many of the months have clear





78 *(left)* 'Command' type and text

79 Manicule point, and one of its anagrams, 'unite, complain', used for the feminist theme.

82 hand-rolling, press-rolling and paper-wrangling

83 *(right)* Typesetting into a stick

84 *(below)* an edited version of my studio type specimen, featuring many of the typefaces used.

themes, but March was less obvious: *building / cities / housing / tv = growing social isolation*, say Melinda's notes. Her feature poem is 'Construction', a Hansard poem about the immigrant camps of the time, and her anagram poem is 'TELEVISION', so instead of treating both poems separately, I turned the entire spread into a television, with the rectangular shape of the Construction poem (created using left and right justification) doubling as a constructed space and a television screen; the title of the anagram evokes the television's logo, the anagram poem itself ranging down on the right as a television speaker, and very quietly on the bottom left, a grid of embossed ornaments double as vents/buttons/a camp plan (*IMAGE 76*).

Whereas everything else had its visual fixity in terms of font, the themed anagram poems not only played with the space, but used font 'personality' to carry their themes: 'Television' (March) uses Eurostile, a font inspired by the television screen, which, we were delighted to discover, was designed in 1962.[114] 'Official Secrets', about ASIO files, is presented in a 'neutral', unemotional Swiss sans serif, Univers. The title of 'Gough Whitlam' is set in the closest font I could find to that used in his iconic 'It's Time' campaign (*image 86*), Christchurch Bold.[115]

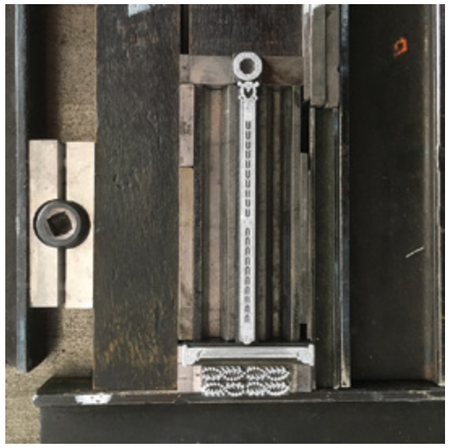
I was diverted into a non-typographic direction by Melinda's lines in 'From this hour henceforth' (January):

> It is all a bit magical
> (they do say
> there are secret masonic symbols hidden
> in the fabric of the building)

Part of my inherited paraphenalia is two blocks depicting High Classical masonic temples. I've never had an excuse to use them, and we both thought it was too good to resist. Including them meant that January would have a measure of illustration not included anywhere else in the book, so I invented small devices for each inner page spread, printed in a very understated white, that added a hint of 'secret message' (*IMAGE 87*). In this I was/am inspired by Jen Farrell, of Starshaped Press in Chicago, who uses her extensive collection of old and new printer's ornaments to construct printed

114 Designed by Aldo Novarese in 1962, its curved lines and the shape of the capital O are based on the curves of a 1950s/60s cathode ray tube television screen. http://typedia.com/explore/typeface/eurostile/ (accessed 04/09/2017).

115 'It's Time' (*right*) used a customised bold serif font, signalling solidity, but slightly flanged out at its base to give a contemporary looseness and promise of excitement. Similarly, Christchurch Bold is part of the Wimble collection, aimed at creating a new Australian campaign (albeit promoting nationalistic protectionism): FT Wimble was a 19th century Australian printing industry entrepreneur who ran a foundry by buying casting mats for international fonts and re-naming them with antipodean place-names (Specimen book: Wimble: c. 1930). I own a drawer of Canberra, and Christchurch; the ANU School of Art & Design has some Otago and Perth (Wimble, c.1930). The NERAM Museum of Printing in Armidale has a fine collection of Wimble products. http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wimble-frederick-thomas-13250 (accessed 04/09/2017).



86 (*left*) An 'It's Time' badge from Gough Whitlam's *1972* election campaign.

87 (*above*) Ornamental embellishments. Clockwise from top left: one of the masonic temple blocks (January); a temple for the housewives (May); a war memorial (November); a laborious forme for very subtle clock-face dots (September); a grid of lined components (television speaker/camp huts) (March); transforming classic ornaments into a missile (October).

Date Thursday, 30 August 1962 **Source** House
Page 1 **Proof** No
Questioner **Responder**
Speaker WENTWORTH, William Charles **Question No.**

Mr WENTWORTH (Mackellar—) (NaN.NaN pm) . - I was surprised that the honorable member for Wilmot **(Mr. Duthie)** did not also enter an eloquent plea for recognition of another great Tasmanian who to date has not been honoured. I refer to a former Prime Minister - **Mr. Joseph** Lyons. His real services to this country have not yet been recognized. No suburb of Canberra has been named after him. I was surprised that the honorable member for Wilmot did not devote his eloquence to the cause honouring perhaps the greatest and most distinguished of Tasmania's sons.

I rise tonight to direct the attention of the House once again to the significance of the remarks passed by the honorable member for La Trobe **(Mr. Jess)** concerning the Communist school at Minto. It is disgraceful that a secret and subversive organization of this kind should be tolerated in our midst. The Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia and other persons are to be congratulated on directing attention to this matter. In his answer to a question asked by the honorable member for La Trobe the Attorney-General **(Sir Garfield Barwick)** has revealed certain facts but he has stated that the Government is not prepared at this stage to reveal certain other facts in its possession. I do not know the nature of those other facts but I do say it is essential for the Government to reveal all the facts about Communist subversion in this country.

Mr Comber (—) (NaN.NaN pm) - What rot!

Mr WENTWORTH (—) (NaN.NaN pm) - The Opposition says, " What rot! " This brings me to the other point. While the honorable member was talking, we could see that the friends of communism in the Opposition were endeavouring to interrupt him by sneering and jeering. I name, for example, the honorable member for Parkes **(Mr. Haylen)** and the honorable member for East Sydney **(Mr. Ward)** who, during the time the honorable member for La Trobe was speaking, were continuously interrupting, sneering and jeering, as indeed some honorable members opposite are doing now, because their policy is to cover up for the Communists. Their policy is to help the Communists. There are certain members of the Opposition - not all of them by any means, but certain of them - who are the friends of communism in many of its guises. One of the things they try to do is to pour scorn on the R.S.L., and on the honorable member for La Trobe or anybody else who gets up in this House and reveals what the Communists are doing and endeavours to get some action taken against them.

I am going to agree with the implied criticism of the Government that it has not been sufficiently vigilant in the past about using the knowledge that it has of these Communists to alert the people of this country as to what communism is. I believe that greater publicity should be given to the operations of the Communist Party, particularly to such operations as those at Minto, which the Communist Party is endeavouring to keep secret, with the maximum security precautions. The so-called bush lovers' club is actually a Communist university. This kind of subversion is going on, not only here, and it is time that the lid was taken off.

88 Excerpt of the Hansard transcript harvested for 'Redfellows', with phrases used in the poem highlighted.

buildings, machines and landscapes.[116] These small touches of embossed detail add to the layers of reading demanded of the reader, as a strategy to encourage cyclical viewing and re-viewing when another stream of content is recognised.

MELINDA ON THE EVOLUTION OF 'REDFELLOWS'

Melinda: I *would like to look more closely at the process of composing one of the found poems from Hansard and the changes it underwent on the way to incorporation in the artist's book.*

We knew that, being 'set' in 1962, our book would need to engage with the Cold War. Not only was there a direct threat in the form of the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of that year, there was in public discourse a pervading atmosphere of paranoia about ideological matters and espionage more generally. At some stage we decided that one of our anagram phrases would be 'official secrets', in acknowledgement of this. I began looking for Hansard material to complement the 'official secrets' idea, searching for speeches containing the words 'spy' or 'agent'. This search turned up a speech in the House of Representatives on Thursday 30 August 1962, by William Charles Wentworth, in which he discusses the activities of suspected communists (IMAGE 88).

As can be seen, the original speech was much longer – the whole thing roughly one and a half pages of text – than the final poem. The process of composing the poem was a careful and painstaking one. Unlike a traditional erasure poem, I was not seeking to make a completely new meaning from the original – rather to bring out the essentials of the original. Every phrase used in the final poem appears in the speech, and for the most part their order within the original speech has been maintained. In this, my project was closer to Duchamp's mirror than Picasso's candle. While in my selection of Hansard phrases I could be described as attempting to make a kind of unified whole, I conceive of it more as a whittling down of what was already present. Perhaps this process could be characterised as polishing Duchamp's mirror a little.

After several hours of tinkering, I arrived at the 'plain text' form of the poem, which reads as follows:

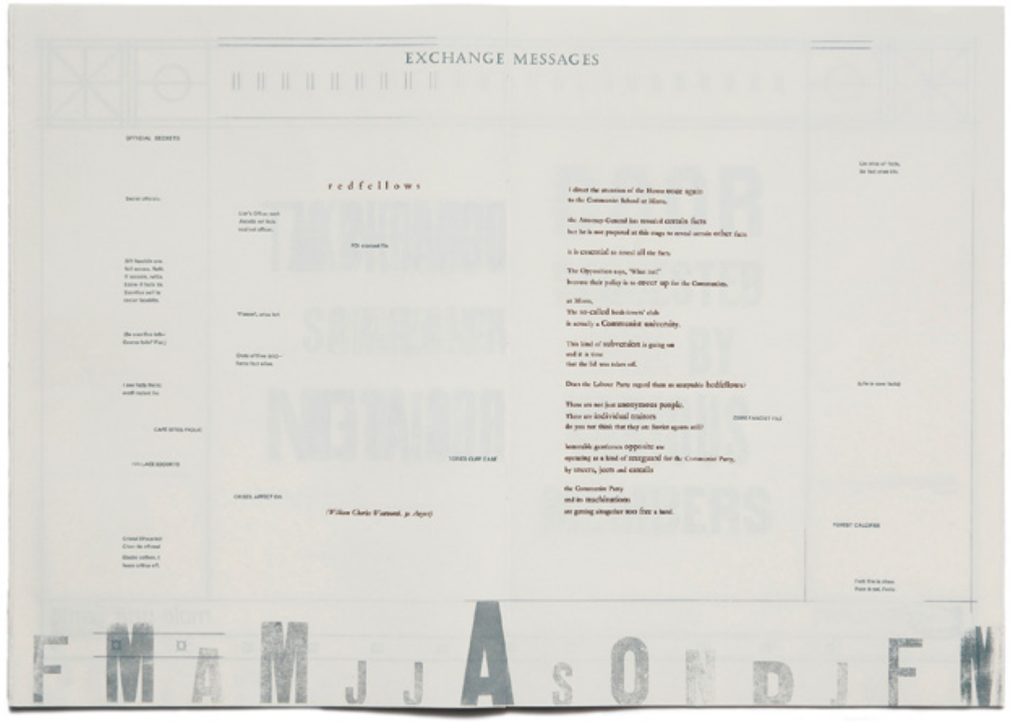
REDFELLOWS

I direct the attention of the House once again
to the Communist school at Minto.

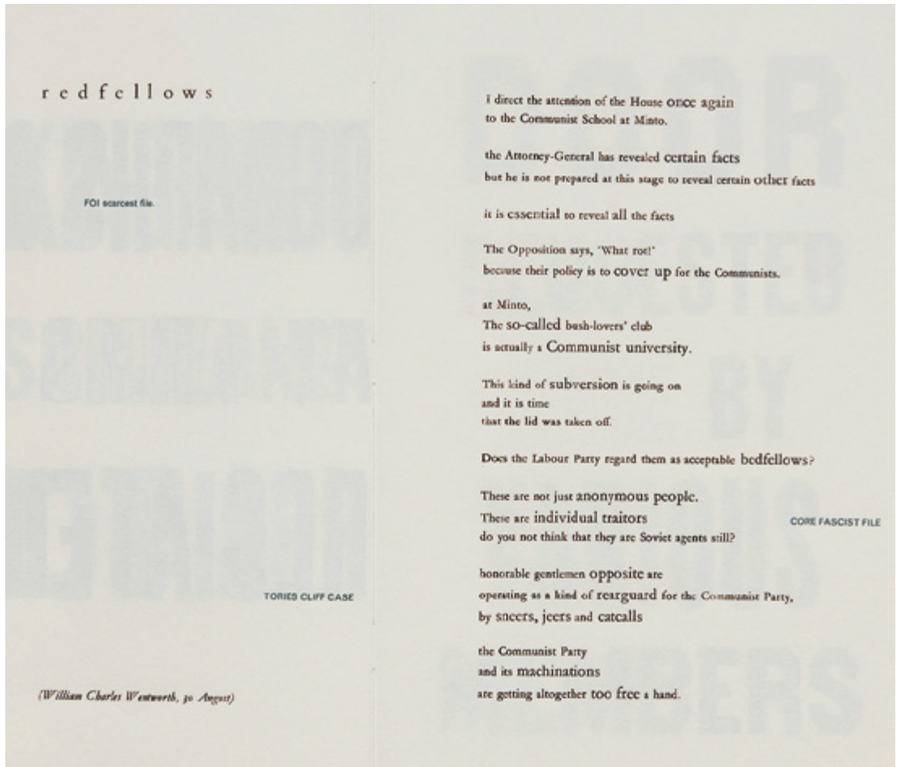
the Attorney-General has revealed certain facts
but he is not prepared at this stage to reveal certain other facts

it is essential to reveal all the facts

116 Jen Farrell, Starshaped Press, Chicago: http://www.starshaped.com/custom-work-2/, and a good example is the print 'The Alphabet Machine': http://www.starshaped.com/custom-work-2/#/the-alphabet-machine/ (accessed 04/09/2017). Her new ornaments are usually designed by her or her network of designer friends and cast by US foundries. I visited her studio in June 2015.



89 Redfellows, whole page view and close up.



The Opposition says, " What rot! "
because their policy is to cover up for the Communists.

at Minto,
The so-called bush lovers' club
is actually a Communist university.

This kind of subversion is going on
and it is time
that the lid was taken off.

Does the Labour Party regard them as acceptable bedfellows?

These are not just anonymous people.
These are individual traitors
do you not think that they are Soviet agents still?

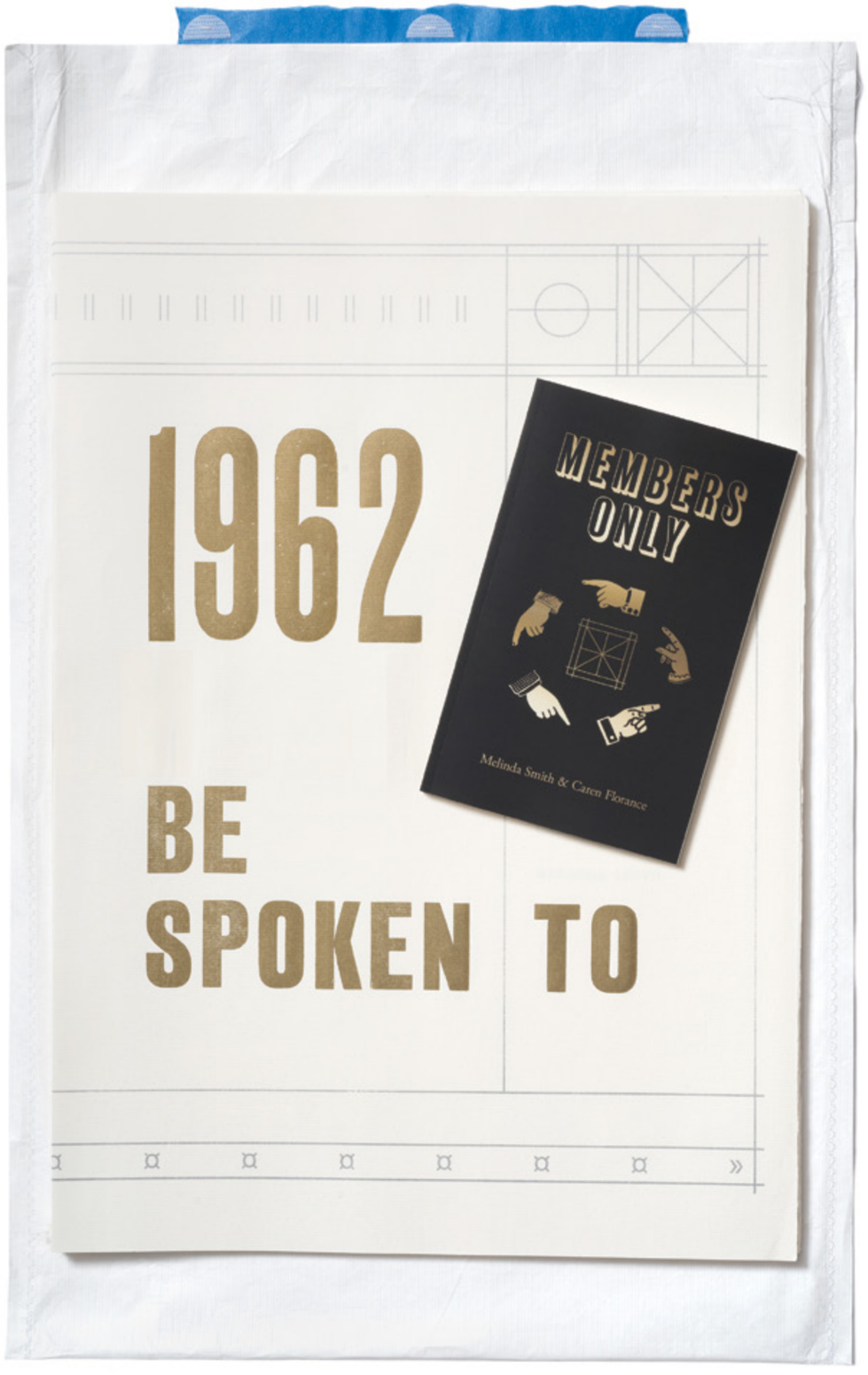
honorable gentlemen opposite are
operating as a kind of rearguard for the Communist Party,
by sneers, jeers and catcalls

the Communist Party
and its machinations
are getting altogether too free a hand.

Once Caren came to work on this poem to set it for printing, she performed (as she does for every poem she sets) a close reading of it. What came out of Caren's close reading was a vivid imaginative reconstruction of the speech rhythms of William Charles Wentworth as he delivered his anti-communist tirade. Caren 'print-performed' this close reading by varying the font size in accordance with where she 'heard' Mr Wentworth emphasising his words. IMAGE *89 shows the result.*

The final 'Redfellows' poem as it appears in 1962: Be Spoken To *(and in the companion chapbook discussed below) is thus an example of a true collaboration between poet and artist. The idea for a poem focusing on spies or agents came from our joint discussion of 'official secrets', and then Caren finessed the eventual text I gave her to add another entire layer to the creative work.*

On a final note, it is worth returning to the situationist détournement impulse that began our original project and assessing how it is reflected in the artist's book. The cut-up sign texts are of course reproduced in the book, so the original 'speaking back' is still present. However the détournement *impulse found a new expression through our re-presentation of Hansard and contemporary newspaper text: with these poems it was less a case of 'speaking back' to the original context, and more a case of using the recontextualisation of the words to 'speak forward' – to draw attention to the enduring nature of certain concerns in public discourse.*



90 ***1962: Be Spoken To*** and ***Members Only.*** Photo: Brenton McGeachie.

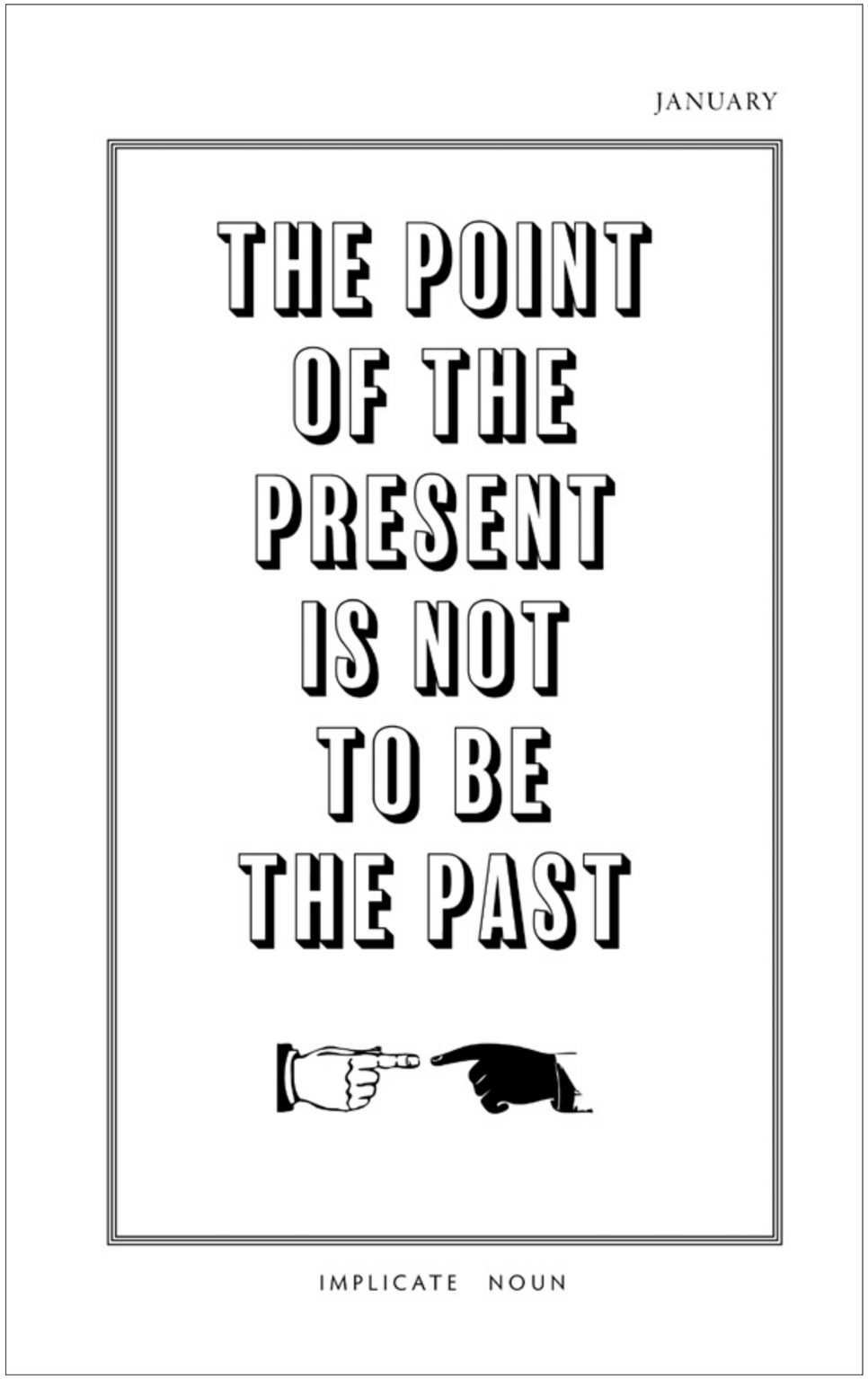
MEMBERS ONLY: POETRY CHAPBOOK

An edition of 6 was planned for *1962: BST*, but even with a policy of not wasting prints because of small mistakes (that are common with hand-rolled printing), only 5 managed to have no unforgivable flaws. Each book is therefore technically rare, an undemocratic artefact that is protected by its own Tyvek slipcase (*ghostbag*). When a copy is exhibited by us, the readers will be able to touch and turn each page with their bare hands; if a copy is bought by an institution, there is a good chance that it will never be touched by ungloved hands again, and it will be exhibited behind glass, frozen in a double-spread tableau like the signs that inspired it.

Consequently, we wanted to make another version, one that was readily accessible. Unlike Angela's chapbook – which was a completely new iteration of our project – this chapbook, titled *Members Only*, is a direct re-presentation of the artist-book, reformatted to suit the affordances of the print-on-demand (POD) process. It is a chance to extend the reach of Melinda's poetry and our carefully-constructed book space, packaged as an affordable, easily distributed publication that can connect with her core readership. Even though I have been working with poetry, little of my output has been directly connected to the wider commercial field of Australian poetry publishing. Interacting with poetry publishers since embarking on my research (thanks to my links with the CCCR and IPSI) has already extended the reach of my practice.[117] I have started writing reviews for poetry journals *Cordite* and *foam:e* about material poetics, in which I try to make connections between poetry books and artists' books, and draw attention to the materiality of poetry publishing (Cordite, 2016). There are many crossovers, sharing similar concerns.

The artist book is large scale (505 x 357 x 14mm). This chapbook is the same compact size as *The Future, Unimagine* (203 x 228mm) (*IMAGE 90*) so instead of trying to transfer everything from the artist book into the small pagespreads, I organised the flow slightly differently: each month starts with the sign text, framed with a simple double line. The next page spread has scraps of the original framework: the union jack and aboriginal flag squares at the head of the recto, with the bottom 'data-vis' graph lines and the relevant month's initial at the tail of the verso. This is where the acronym poem is presented, using a digital sans serif font called Hypatia Sans Pro (named for the female mathematician and astronomer from the Byzantine Empire). The next page spread has no ornamentation, and allows the primary poem of the month, which is typeset in the same typographic configuration as the original, to fully occupy the double spread unimpeded. So the rhythm of the chapbook, after the forematter, is a clear pulsing poetic metre of ABCABCABC for all twelve months. The small cream ornament details have been omitted, but the manicule acronyms still appear, and

117 IPSI: International Poetry Studies Institute, part of the University of Canberra's Centre for Creative and Cultural Research (CCCR), where my PhD project is situated.



91 *Members Only* (2017), January title.

one thematic addition to differentiate it from the artist book is a proliferation of new manicules, with the sign text each matched playfully to the sign's 'mood'. For example, the January sign text is THE POINT OF THE PRESENT IS NOT TO BE THE PAST, and the manicule points used are white and black, almost touching fingertips (*IMAGE 91*). The 'point' here, stemming from our initial impulse to stem the book from one small but important milestone in Australia's treatment of our indigenous peoples, is one of racial awareness. In other months the hands look clerical, religious, wan, didactic, and in August, when the 'Serjeant-at-arms' does not appreciate photographs, I have taken full advantage of the digital environment to insert a (anachronistic) Facebook hand, pointing its thumb down.

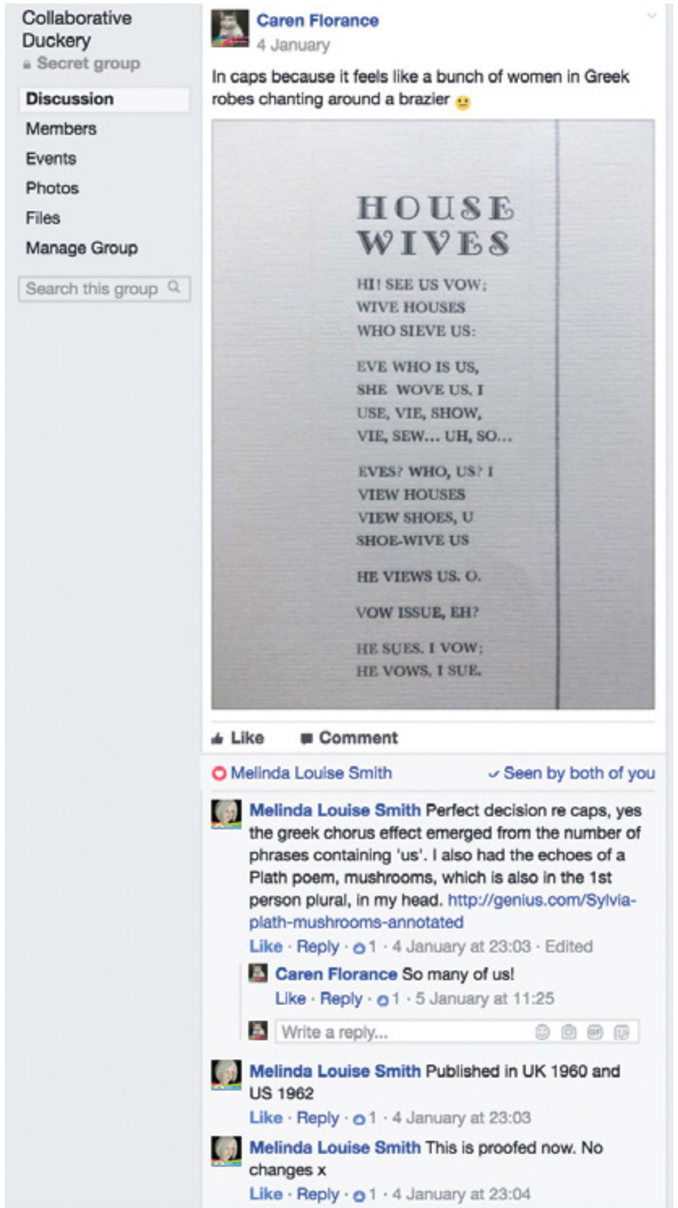
We have all faith that this work's myriad complexities will be teased out by its readers. As Melinda writes in our *Foreword* (only included in the chapbook):

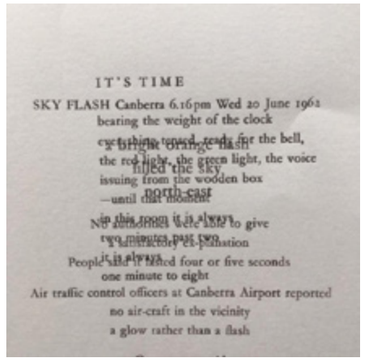
> As we listened to the voices heard in the building 55 years ago, we became aware of loud echoes in present-day debates ranging from public health to migrant accommodation. Some things have barely changed at all – and others have changed in very unpredictable ways. In composing and framing the texts, we have deliberately placed 1962 in conversation with the early 21st century. Eerily, these conversations are continuing: the 'official secrets' poem has quite suddenly come to seem like a poem about 'alternative facts', despite being written months before the phrase was ever uttered. … In the interaction of the found poems with the surrounding anagrams, sign text, and section titles, there are a number of intricacies which will (we hope) repay multiple readings. Please enjoy. (2017: 6)

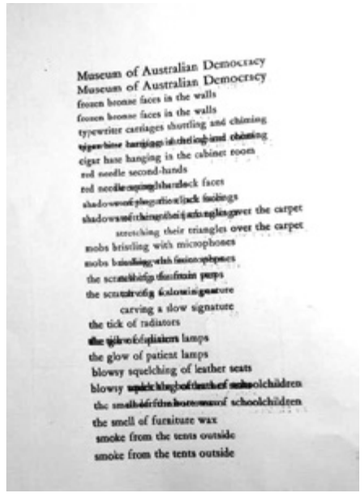
COLLABORATIVE DUCKERY

Whereas Angela and I had corresponded occasionally, doing short but intense bursts of activity and supplementing them with infrequent emails and a few skypes, Melinda and I were in contact a lot more because we used social media to confer with each other. We started a private chat room called 'Collaborative Duckery', where we would share photos of the OPH details and proofs of poems and prints (*IMAGE 92*). I would also share overprints, which often created generative readings akin to those of Working Papers, but this was a different kind of project and we set them aside for future possibilities (*IMAGE 93*).

> **Melinda:** *Looking back over our three years of working together, my collaboration with Caren has enriched me creatively in many ways. It has caused me to acknowledge and articulate for myself and others the role of play and experimentation in my practice, and has made me critically examine the ways in which I use found or appropriated text. It has also revitalised my relationship with and thinking about page-space, and has in addition led me to a more nuanced understanding of the many versions and lives a poem can go through and take on. Further, as my first project-based extended creative collaboration, it also taught me many lessons about myself, and about how one creative mind might go about working with another. It also reconfirmed for me the value of engaging with art outside one's immediate field of practice.*







92 (above): a sample of our Collaborative Duckery chat.

93 (right): a series of over-prints and examples of what happened when the sign-texts had to be separated to straddle two page signatures.

During the many meetings, site visits, posts and replies in our secret 'Collaborative Duckery' two-person Facebook Group, and email conversations I had with Caren over the course of this work together, I often found myself wondering what we would have looked and sounded like to a third party observer. Both of us have a very circular and multi-stranded interaction style (as opposed to a linear one). By this I mean that during our discussions, important matters might be raised multiple times in a fluid way, with our conversation sliding off-topic at several intermediate points only to circle back around to the key issue. Another collaborator (or spectator) might have found this method of proceeding extremely inefficient and frustrating, but as is evidenced by the work we have made together, for us it was natural – and creatively productive. It was also necessary – both of us have extremely busy professional and family lives, which means our creative work is subject to frequent interruptions, many of them unscheduled. Developing our ideas in a piecemeal fashion over many iterations was the only possible way we could have worked together.

This multi-stranded interaction is common to all the collaborations undertaken for this *Collaborative Materiality*, and typifies a mode of working in my practice that is contingent, playful and open to fluid outcomes. To have a carefully-planned research or working plan is to deny the playfulness that studio research demands, and would bring the making space back into the realm of commission, or production. Despite all the planning and charts that Melinda and I drew up and navigated by, each part of the project was able to recalibrate its route in the face of new ideas or technical hitches. The books we produced are as much a souvenir of the processes we undertook together in the recent past as they are a deliberately constructed missive for the reader of the future.

I AM A LESSON, I AM A WARNING
READING SPACES
ARTIST BOOKS POETRY POETICS
Caren Florance
ANGELA GARDNER, MELINDA SMITH,
OWEN BULLOCK, SARAH RICE & ETC

THE PROBLEM

> *In our process of thinking about the artist's book as a medium within the visual arts, notions of in-between positions and transition as relations to the material came to life. On the one hand, there is a book: while turning over pages, the viewer develops a relation with regards to the paper, the ink, the colours, and the words. On the other, we are dealing with the visual arts here, which implies that the book will be put on display and locked up in exhibitions, museums, or galleries as a precious object. Often, the possibility of looking, reading, holding, and feeling the book is lost. In this respect, the artist's book constitutes a zone outside of the ordinary, and with regards to its function, its treatment, its history, and its definitions, takes up an in-between position.*
>
> Editorial statement, *Kunstlicht* journal 36[118]

Johanna Drucker, in an interview with Matthew Kirshenbaum, discussed the difficulties of exhibiting artist books, or any unusual format that requires intimate and sustained engagement (such as video work):

> The problems which artists' books face don't seem to be based so much in critical resistance … as in the 'demographics' of the form. What I mean is that artists' books are difficult to exhibit, haven't found their niche in either the artworld (can't show them in a case very successfully) or the literary world (often they are too pictorial). …
>
> The 'bookness' of the book which artists' books attend to does raise a few critical issues. *First, the familiar conventions of a book are often violated or ignored in a phenomenon I call the 'no introduction' syndrome. With an object as conventional as a book, this is baffling to many first-time viewers*. Second, books are time-based media. They unfold in sequence (fixed or not) over time, require a certain amount of attention, and can't be taken in in the 'all at once glance' mode which we have come to believe is the correct way of viewing visual art. … *there is a critical issue at the core here, which has to do with the discrepancy between expectations brought to the experience of art and the actual encounter with an artist's book*. Artists' books, like all books, both provide and require an intimate experience – it is hard to reconcile with public venues, mass audience, or display given their small scale, one-on-one format. I think this is an insurmountable problem, basically, but that it doesn't keep artist books from finding an audience (small), a home (private and public collections) and critical recognition (growing). (Kirschenbaum, 1997: 90, my emphases)

This is by no means an isolated observation, but it is succinct. The dissemination and reading of artist books is, and has always been, a major issue. Artists like Ed Ruscha started making their offset books as a direct reaction to the elite culture of the gallery system, wanting to showcase their work in a mediated yet accessible way and hoping to get their books out into mainstream venues. It wasn't easy: offset printing was expensive unless you printed in large quantities, and large quantities are hard to move without a distribution system. Lucy Lippard wrote this still-relevant observation in 1977 about conceptual artist books (now called **art books**) like Ruscha's:

118 Ploegman, H., Spronke, V., on behalf of the editorial board. 2015. Editorial. *Kunstlicht*, 36, 5-8 (5).

> Since [1968], hundreds of artists' books have appeared. Yet they are never reviewed, not even in art magazines, either as books or as exhibitions. So far, artist books have been dispersed (usually as gifts) to friends and colleagues, then left to languish in warehouses, studios, and gallery back rooms. They are published by the artists themselves, by small underground presses, or by a few galleries – the latter more often in Europe than in America. Art dealers are more interested in selling 'real art,' on which they can make a profit, and tend to see artist's books as handy hand-outs to potential buyers of expensive objects. Even art bookstores makes a little profit on artist books that they neglect them in favour of more elaborate times. Artists unaffiliated with galleries have no way to distribute their books widely and really recoup printing costs, which, though fairly low, many cannot afford in the first place.[119]

Art books have now developed a slightly more efficient distribution network, thanks to the rise of specialized bookshops and art book fairs, and of course, the internet.[120] Artist books, though, are still struggling, especially in this corner of the world, thanks to our low population and geographical distance from each other (let alone from the northern hemisphere). We have no dedicated galleries representing the field, and few collectors.

One of Australia's few serious collectors, Monica Oppen,[121] has also written about the problems of exhibiting books:

> In the gallery the book struggles. The space for a reader and reading is usually denied. Unless reading more than the displayed opening is allowed and there are comfortable seats, there is no reading space. The works that jump forward, making the show eye-catching, are the pieces that mimic the space, that are extroverted and engage quickly, so these works are favoured by curators who want to cover white walls, who therefore have little interest in any tight parameters of what an artist's book is. The bigger and more cavernous the gallery space, the more this is true. The smaller and more intimate the gallery, the better chance the book has of engaging. The ideal space would be set up with comfortable chairs that invite sitting, reading and spending time. [Oppen: 2015: 6]

I have seen Monica in action as a reader: at an exhibition I curated in 2013, one of the books included a sound file. We placed a chair beside the book to allow people to listen as they looked. Monica was not particularly enamoured of the book until she sat and listened. She spent more time listening than most people spent in the whole exhibition, and her face lit up as she made the connections that the artist, Antonia Aitken, desired of her audience (*IMAGE 94*).[122] I wanted that depth of engagement for my work, and the key seemed to be the supportive environment.

119 Catalano quotes Ruscha: 'It is almost worth the money to have the thrill of seeing 400 exactly identical books stacked in front of you' (1983: 16).
120 An example of such a book shop is Onomatopee in the Netherlands: http://www.onomatopee.net/ (accessed 04/09/2017). The NGV Art Book Fair in Melbourne is typical of many others in the northern hemisphere: https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/whats-on/programs-events/art-book-fair/ (accessed 04/09/2017).
121 Oppen has a private library of artist books in Sydney that is accessible to the public by appointment. She is also a printmaker and bookbinder and makes her own artist books. http://www.bibliotheca.org.au (accessed 04/09/2017).
122 The exhibition was 100*%: Books by Canberra Artists* (the title was tying it to the city's centenary celebrations), 11-28 April 2013. The book is *Drawing the Step*, 2012 by Antonia Aitken: etching and letterpress on Rives heavy weight paper, birch plywood covers and accompanying CD of a soundtrack of Aitken doing walks around New York, scratching her plates with the swing of her arms, including one dramatic walk as Hurricane Sandy approached the area.

READING/RECEIVING

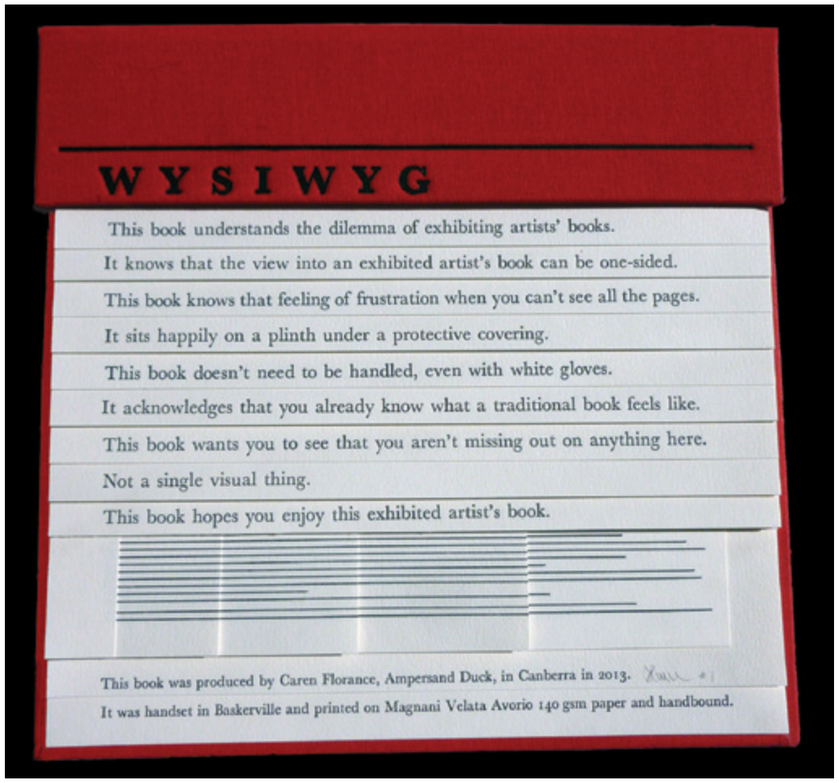
There seem to be tensions inherent around the artist book about image and text: too much text and it seems *other than art* (unless the book is completely, consciously textual[123]). When I started showing my book work to poets (after many years of engaging with the visual arts community), I was startled at how they approached the work: they actually *read* the pages, text and all, whereas in an artists' book exhibition, especially when the books are on plinths or behind glass, the text pages are looked *at*, or *through*.

In fact, despite all the talk and writing about artist books and their page rhythms and transversality and time, I feel that contemporary artist books are starting to become a series of interconnected double-page spreads rather than a cohesive narrative thanks to the inability for anyone to handle them in any meaningful way once they have left the studio. Thanks to institutional concerns about value and conservation, most people encounter artist books as single page spreads in vitrines or on shelves or as photographs in catalogues and websites. There are few opportunities to handle work unless one buys it or curates it. Of course, once work is in the control of someone else, the artist has little say in its presentation unless there are specific instructions included with the book. *Redex* (2014) was displayed in a number of exhibitions in 2015, and none of them allowed it to be touched. It was displayed sandwiched between sheets of Perspex to allow light to show through and highlight its play of text, but by doing so it reverted to a static object, a print rather than a book. I made an artist book about this problem in 2013, called *WYSIWYG* (*IMAGE 95*).[124] My book does not need to be touched: everything (text, image) is on the surface, yet it has multiple pages and a hard cover. It is a meta response to many gloomy conversations with librarians and artists about what to do with books in exhibitions.

94 Monica Oppen reading Antonia Aitken's *Drawing the Step* (2012) at 100%: Books by Canberra Artists, Watson Arts Centre, 11-28 April 2013.

Marjorie Perloff writes, in the context of visual poetry, of the 'work's ***faktura*** … the visual dimension of a given text' (2006: 259). It's a helpful term that can be used alongside bibliographic code. It derives from the collage aspect of painting Russian

123 Cf. artists like Fiona Banner, Sally Alatalo and Australian printmaker Angela Cavalieri.
124 What You See Is What You Get. WYSIWYG is a computing acronym, coined for the kind of design layout software that is ubiquitous now, but was a revolutionary improvement upon earlier attempts to perform bibliographic code by computer code.



95 Caren Florance, WYSIWYG 2013. Letterpress on paper, papercut, cased binding.

icons, and was adopted by the avant-garde constructivist painters as a way of describing surface work (Buchloh, 1984: 86). Perloff also mentions the ***textura***, 'the feel of the page itself' (2006: 266). Another useful variant is ***facture***, which refers to the 'indications in an artifact of its having been made' (Summers, 2003: 684), which is a form of reading an (art) object's material history by the traces of process found upon it, that is, deciphering, say, the printmaking processes (differentiating between screen and stone), the kind of paper used (rag, wood, silk, perhaps) and the particular tools used to create effect.

A purely textual artist book may be intimidating in its demand for sustained attention, but its innate materiality, its *faktura* and *textura*, is foregrounded when it can be handled, and this then becomes haptic reading: the feel of the paper to the fingers; the sound of the paper turning; a chance to touch stitching, impressions made by type or block, and most importantly, to observe the *facture*, the marks of making, unsmoothed by camera angle and lighting, things like paper cockles, smudges, imperfections in the layout. It is unglamorous, and yet glamour (in the magical sense of the word), and it is affective reading, connecting work to the eye via the hand, creating desire lines of responsiveness.[125]

125 For a detailed theoretical investigation of the haptic possibilities of artist books, see the exegesis of Dr Tim Mosely, 'The Haptic Touch of Books by Artists', QCA, Griffith University, 2014.

The word *intimate* is often used when writing about artist books. This is Philip Cabau:

> The artist's book often presupposes reading modes that demand spatial transversality: to read the page's surface but also above and under it. Medium, text, and image organize a complex space that starts just before the page, closer to the observer's gaze, and goes through the paper, including it. Reading an artist's book is a diverse, hybrid and discontinuous process. (2014: 4)

Unless books are readily handled, none of this can be encountered. Many of the hesitancies in allowing touch in gallery situations are related to value (*ownership*, *worth*, *newness*), as if a hand-made object hasn't already been handled many times before being shown. Other concerns, especially regarding institutional collections, relate to *conservation*, a commitment to preserve holdings for as long as possible (ideally 'forever'). The experience of the book's materiality becomes a privilege rather than an essential component of the book's existence. This could perhaps change if the marks of handling could be regarded as another layer of *faktura*, a consequence of *textura*, and part of the book's provenance.

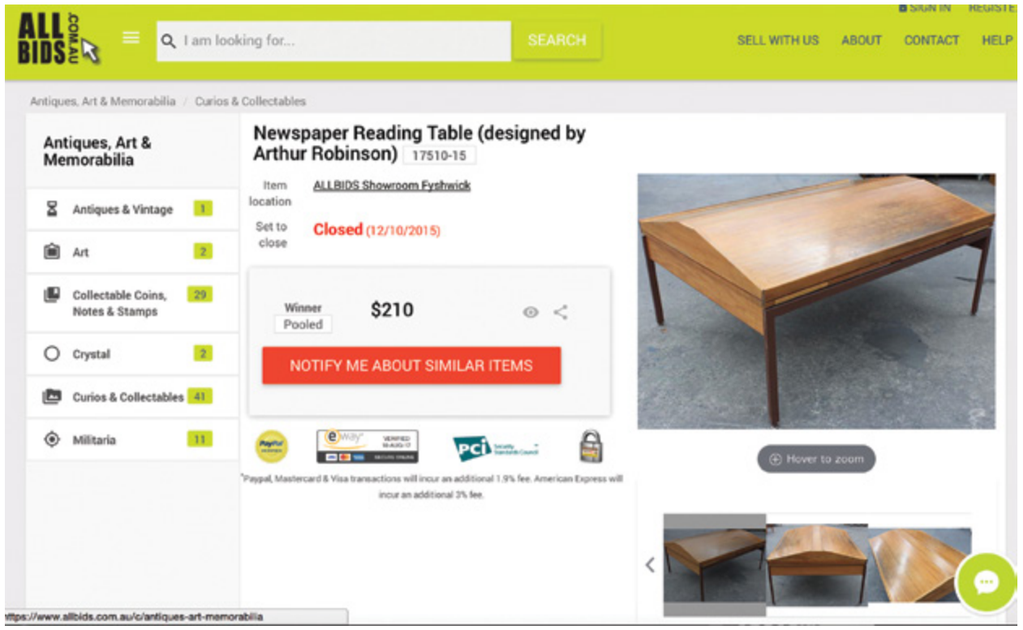
This is not to say that the book should be handled without respect or care for its particular fragilities. Bookbinding has developed over centuries to provide maximum protection for a book's vulnerable centre. Many artist books, especially unbound ones like mine, are not protected in this way and have unique peculiarities that reveal themselves in the handling. Supervised, supportive handling is the easiest way to protect such work, but it is a labour-intensive manner of exhibiting.

PLANNING SPACES

How to supportively present the work we were making was ever-present in my mind from the start of the project. Knowing that we wanted somehow to reach across our respective audiences – art and literary – had me thinking about multiple events. Maybe a bookstore launch and a small exhibition? Maybe a 'happening', perhaps at a festival? Whatever it would be, I wanted people to read the work, not glance at it.

When I was forwarded the opportunity to successfully bid on an ex-National Library of Australia newspaper reading table in an internet auction in 2015 (*IMAGE 96*), it shaped a lot of the material decisions about the format of the artist books I wanted to make with Angela and Melinda. The table was designed for the NLA by Arthur Robinson specifically to support the reading of large sheets of paper, with sloped surfaces beaded at their base to prevent the paper sliding down.[126] Winning the table (with an incredibly low bid) gave me the starting point for an exhibition concept, one that could perhaps provide the intimacy needed for proper engagement with the object. I could work at a tabloid size, which was a full sheet of art paper folded into two, a size that was relatively

126 https://www.allbids.com.au/auctions/681445/newspaper-reading-table-designed-by-arthur-robinson (accessed 04/09/2017). The auction listing is mine, but the photo is a generic one; my table had a much prettier top surface.



96 The impulse buy that initiated a train of design decisions.

97 *Material Poetics*, ANCA Gallery, with my 'kitchen' reading table in the foreground.

large-scale, but still familiar, thanks to the convention of newspaper publishing, and hence providing an 'introduction' to their handling. Perhaps all the works could have a similar style of introduction?

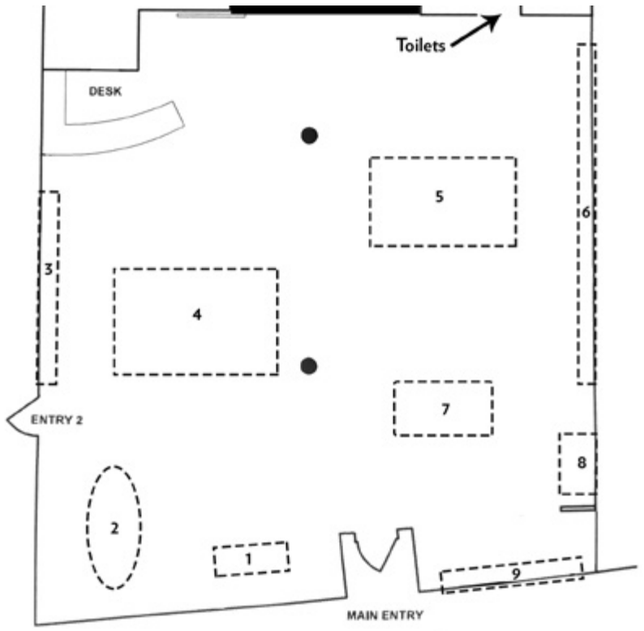
I would like to say that everything fell into place from this moment, but in truth my ideas had to be contingent as circumstances changed, and they developed as I negotiated with various parties. My university does not have a gallery, and by the time I was given permission to book a venue, all the Canberra galleries had filled their programs. My first action was to book a small space: a heritage classroom in an old school-turned-arts-centre. It was to be a reading room, a gallery/bookstore hybrid: my reading table supporting the large artist books, and a comfortable armchair next to a bookshelf with the chapbooks and zines. The intimate size was appealing, but there were aspects of the room that nagged at me as I thought it through. It had an old-fashioned air and a blackboard running across one wall that couldn't be used. Would this signal that I was being nostalgic about the history of the book and didactic about the role of the book? Also, I wanted people to freely handle the works, but I am realistic about the damage that occurs when work is handled badly, so personal supervision is optimal for the safety of the work. In such a small space, having a person supervising in a corner might be considered too close, akin to a teacher. Again: didactic, uncomfortable.

A few months before deadline, I lucked upon another available space. East Space, at Commonwealth Place, was the polar opposite of the classroom: a spacious but neglected gallery situated in an iconic Canberra location, next to the lake in the Parliamentary triangle, between the National Library and the National Gallery. It had its own problems: no lighting or internet, leaks in odd places when raining.[127] It was really too big for my work, with two vast rooms to fill, but it also had a reception desk that allowed me to sit at a distance and oversee in a fairly invisible manner, and it had a stunning, expansive view of Lake Burley Griffin, the Australian War Memorial and Mt Ainslie. People walked past at all hours, exercising, socializing, doing the tourist circuit of national institutions.

Even after I blocked off the back room, I had plenty of space to arrange the work I'd made over the last 3 years. In 2016 I tested the notion of creating a reading space in a group exhibition at ANCA Gallery called *Material Poetics*.[128] I set up my kitchen table and four chairs, with one book laid out per chair (*IMAGE 97*). One of the books, *Touch 00100000*, is interactive: the reader makes spaces in the book by punching out the loose counters from heavily hand-typed zeros, breaking through the precious skin of

127 Originally the stop-gap National Portrait Gallery, the space was then inhabited by the University of Canberra as a Design Gallery, with input from Architects and Landscape Architects associations. When the Design Gallery relocated, the National Gallery of Australia used it as NGA Contemporary before institutional funding cuts made the necessary maintenance too expensive and the administration was handed back to the National Capital Authority, who rent the space for short-term private functions.

128 Material Poetics, ANCA Gallery, Canberra, 24 Aug - 11 Sept 2016. Curated by Jen Webb and myself. We produced a hard copy and downloadable room brochure: https://issuu.com/ampersandduck/docs/matpo_anca2016_web (accessed 04/09/2017).



98 Reading Spaces, zones of activity (see Introduction, 11)

Area 1: Solitary reading 1
Area 2: Mobile words
Area 3: Wall reading 1
Area 4: Book lounge
Area 5: Formal reading
Area 6: Wall reading 2
Area 7: Kitchen table
Area 8: Solitary reading 2
Area 9: Digital reading

The main entry (at the bottom of the map) faced the lake.

99 Owen Bullock, reading his *Tracer: You are here* in *Reading Spaces*. He has since written a poem about the experience.

the white pages. It was wonderful to see people taking the time to sit and interact with the book; the simplicity of the kitchen table broke through the formality of the gallery and encouraged play.

Because of the extra space available in this gallery, I could expand upon this idea, adding a large formal table with formal reading and a more comfortable, informal reading area, as well as using the wall space. What resulted was zones of reading activity: *solitary reading*, *wall reading*, *digital reading*, *mobile words*, *kitchen table*, *formal reading*, *book lounge* (*IMAGE 98*).[129] Each work was 'introduced' by its furniture or placement, and also by the 'tone' of the furniture. Owen Bullock's *Tracer: you are here*, a book of haiku about place, landscape and people (*IMAGE 25*), sat on a small battered table facing the large wall of glass window, overlooking the lake and the bypassers (*IMAGE 99*). One reader exclaimed joyfully within seconds of sitting because the first words her eyes landed upon were:

> the sky
> and all of the lake
> in the lake

Another reader pointed out that the crumpled glassine paper echoed the lake's surface.

The kitchen table, both here and in the earlier exhibition, was supposed to suggest a familiar, recognizable space of experimental making and activity, a space particularly connected to women and craft. It held my solo work, discussed on pages 70-73, including Touch 00100000, with its tweezers and jar. Many people sat and happily pulled out letter-counters (*IMAGES 33, 104*).

The 'book lounge', four comfortable chairs and a coffee table laden with both original reading matter (*Swipe*, *The Future Un-Imagine*, *Members Only*, *Interference*, *Tracer*) and support material (journals I've published in and poetry books I've designed), also provided a resting space where conversations would arise about the work. One day an older couple walked in from their lakeside stroll; he, reluctant to be there, sat in the lounge, looking out the window while she looked at the work. I noticed that they were wearing entry passes to the National Folk Festival (which brings in a huge crowd from around Australia) and showed him Owen Bullock's poem about the Festival in *Tracer* (2015: 16-17). He read it, and then kept reading, working his way through many of the books, and then showing them to his partner. She showed him through *1962: BST*. They engaged with the show for around an hour and bought a couple of small books. That, for me, demonstrated the success of the layout concept as well as the importance of active (but gentle) supervision of the space.

The efficacy of the exhibition floor-plan was exceptional because of the particular charm of the venue: the *Pleasure Demolition* mobile, turning freely in the windowed corner, could be also seen by the street lights at night and drew in people who would not

129 The exhibition List of Works is Appendix 2: 193-195.

100 Areas 1 (*Tracer: You are here*) and 2 (*Pleasure Demolition*). Photo: Brenton McGeachie.

101 Areas 3 (*Secret Life* and *Be Spoken To*) and 4 (Reading Lounge, featuring the POD books, zines and support reading). Photos: Brenton McGeachie.

102 Areas 5 (*Working Papers & 1962: Be Spoken To*), 6 (*Jostles*), 7 (Kitchen table reading, with my solo work), 8 (*Shared Rooms*, my Honours work (support reading), 9 (*Vitreous Syneresis (I see you sometimes)*). Photo: Brenton McGeachie.

103 An overview of the whole gallery space (from the desk). Photo: Brenton McGeachie.

104 (*both pages*): a sample of audience engagement. Even when (far right, bottom) the weather turned and trapped a group inside, the conversation didn't stray far from the books.

ordinarily look at artist books. The position of the venue resonated with the work itself, with so many material ties to Old Parliament House and the NLA, both short walks away. Even the chairs used at the various desks and tables had local meaning, designed and built by Fred Ward in the 1960s, and lent to me by his family (IMAGES *100-104*).[130]

It would be impossible to replicate the serendipitous aura of this particular show, but the exhibition concept of creating dedicated reading spaces is as portable as the books. I borrowed most of the furniture that I didn't own from a local secondhand store; similar 'grades' of furniture could be organized in any town or city, with the newspaper reading table substituted by a large formal meeting table.[131] The important element is that the furniture itself provides an entry point to the books, introducing the different material approaches to similar ideas. This seems to break through the hesitancy to engage with different kinds of reading within a visual art context. I hope to tour the concept over the next few years.

READER/ RESPONDING

> *The writings of Blanchot on the book come from the depth of his life/work as a reader. Can it be said that I enter the discussion from 'the other end', as if it were a genuine spectrum. He enters the finished book/text, I enter the process of a text in its becoming a book.*
> Alan Loney[132]

Using the depth of my experience as a book maker, I give myself the chance to respond as a reader to the words of my collaborators as freely as is possible when using processes that demand planning. Innumerable thoughts, arising whilst working, have woven into/ through the books in *Reading Spaces*. Some are obvious, others will reveal themselves, some may never again be recognized by the next reader. While I'm making/looking/ printing/setting/sewing/testing, my inner thoughts are riffing on the permutations of either the words I'm dealing with or the materials I'm using. For example, when stitching small shards of Super8 film into the pages of *Tracer: You are here*, I vary the the stitches to make visual markers. On every page but one, the poems sit on the recto; I sew one piece of bright hand-coloured film on a verso to direct the reader toward those aberrant poems, and as I punch the holes to allow smooth stitching, I notice that the nearest poem talks about 'crossing his heart' – suddenly the stitches have to be crosses. This is unplanned, but easy to achieve. As I stitch the tiny crosses, my thoughts roam through: *stitches/ hearts/ sutures/ surgery/ wounds/ healing/ scarring/ pain/ pulling/ holes/ crossing/ holding/ close/ closing/* ... and so forth. If this is the process when making, what associations will the reader make when reading, if the time is taken to ponder?

The time taken is the rub; without the privilege of ownership, or the ease of library access, few people can really spend a lot of time with an artist book. Iser talks of the benefits of re-reading in terms of time and awareness:

> In every text there is a potential time-sequence which the reader must inevitably realise, as it is impossible to absorb even a short text in a single moment. Thus the reading process always involves viewing the text through a perspective that is continually on the move, linking up the different phases, and so constructing what we have called the virtual dimension. This dimension, of course, varies all the time we are reading. However, when we have finished the text, and read it again, clearly our extra knowledge will result in a different time-sequence; we shall tend to establish connections by referring to our awareness of what is to come, and so certain aspects of the text will assume a significance we did not attach to them on a first reading, while others will recede into the background. (1988 [1972]: 217)

This time-sequence is part of the close reading performed in the studio, but equivalent time for the next reader cannot be taken for granted. Many of my *Reading Spaces* audience stayed for lengthy reading periods (often surprising themselves), and a few returned to re-read, but for the most part people came having allotted themselves the usual gallery visitation time quota, and whatever impressions that could be gleaned from one visit had to suffice. This is a good rationale for exhibiting work more than once, and ensuring that each exhibition provides an effective reading space, to allow connections to form, of any kind. It is also another reason why Angela and Melinda and I produced commercial, more publicly-available versions of our limited editioned work: hopefully the commercial poetry volumes will send readers back to the artist books.

> The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; [they are] simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted. (Barthes, 1977b [1968]: 148)

What Barthes is saying is that there is no way of predicting the reader's intimate response to a work; the work has to be made primarily for the self, not for some ideal reader. All the meanings we embed are a field of possibilities and traces that only might be comprehended by another. There are ways of guiding the reader to a constructed meaning, and strategies that can be used to create affect, but each reader has their own diverse reasons for response. and with work that cannot go home with the reader, a supportive environment allows time for them to formulate something deeper than instant responses.Garnering audience responses to artwork via surveys or guestbooks tends to only glean the instant reactions.

130 Fred Ward (1900-1990) built furniture for the new Australian National University, as well as the National Library of Australia: http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ward-frederick-charles-cecil-fred-15863 (accessed 04/09/2017).

131 I tried to find a good home for the ex-NLA table after the show. It was so heavy and large that it had been stored on a pallet under tarps in my back garden for 18 months before I could use it. It would have been impossible to keep it let alone transport to other cities. It went to a local preschool, to use for reading in their library. I showed *1962 BST* again in Canberra in August 2017, and used an old ex-government desk, which worked well.

132 Loney, A. 2008. *Each New Book*, Berkeley, Codex Foundation: 17.

As well as sitting and talking to the people who attended the exhibition, I placed a pile of anonymous-response forms on the 'reception' bench and encouraged people to contribute thoughts. It had one single request: *Tell me about your favourite piece and why you like it*. I received a small bundle of responses, the majority focused on the materiality of the works, including:

Work: *Tracer: You are here*
What I liked about it was... *crinkly paper, delicious sounds of turning pages, hilarious little nuggets of writing. Incredible view!*

Work: *Tracer: You are here*
What I liked about it was... *The sensuality of the experience of reading it. The snippets of moments floating through the translucency.*

Work: *Mobile Words* [Pleasure Demolition]
What I liked about it was... *the movement, both physically and the ways in which it can be read. I love that you can take each element as a stand alone word statement [sic] or you can create sentences and new phrases.*

Work: *Be Spoken To* [the MoAD signs]
What I liked about it was... *The gold and how that changes it from just straightforward paper and ink, into something that has physical depth, and an emotive quality.*

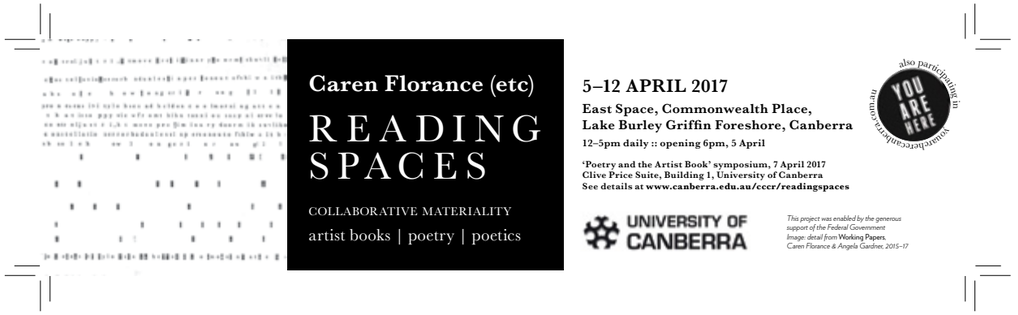
Work: *1962 Be Spoken To*
What I liked about it was... *The materiality slows down the reading.*

Work: *1962 Be Spoken To*
What I liked about it was... *Multiple layers of ideas / Political, playful / Formal, subversive / Presentation perfect.*

Other verbal responses commented upon the materiality, especially the feel of the papers used. One person expressed disappointment that *Members Only* didn't have the tactility of *1962: BST*, but they purchased it anyway 'for the quality of the poetry'. There were many remarks about time: the time it must have taken to make the work, surprise at how much time they had spent reading. See the cluster of activity in IMAGE 104.

A constant thread of commentary was how refreshing it was to be able to handle the books. Conversations with rare book librarians over the past ten years have brought me to the conclusion that white gloves are not best practice when handling pages; people tend to fumble with the extra layer and the likelihood of damage actually increases.[133] My strategy was to set up a hand-cleaning station at the counter with moist towelettes and posted signage that requested clean hands and no food or drink. It was highly successful, but again this is dependent upon constant supervision of the space.

133 Institutions are now publishing blog articles about this: see this one from the British Library: http://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2011/08/white-gloves-or-not-white-gloves.html# (accessed 04/09/2017).



105 invitations to the exhibition. Top is the hard copy. They were bookmarks, with four separate details from *Working Papers* to choose from. The other two are the digital invitations, one for each of the major collaborations so that each poet could promote their own work.

106 Reuben Ingall, transcreating *Working Papers: Torrent*. We recorded and filmed the performance.

ITERATION, REITERATION

Because I organized the exhibition without the support structure of a regular gallery, I had to undertake all the promotion myself (see *IMAGE 105* for my invitation strategy). As well as placing ads in relevant publications (*Imprint*, *Art Almanac*) and on social media, I also connected with a local arts festival, You Are Here, as part of their public programs. Because they promote experimental collaborative work, they asked if I could include a dedicated original event that tied the festival to my own collaborative work. During some brainstorming with one of the YAH committee, I mentioned that I'd always thought *Working Papers* could be used as a score for sound. They jumped at the idea and put me in touch with local electronica musician Rueben Ingall. He was keen to play, then extremely enthusiastic when he saw the pages. This is what he came up with:

> My plan is to treat your prints as graphic scores for a patch ('computer-instrument' perhaps) I am making. I'll bring my laptop and a speaker … and type out the letters (and the marks from the upside down letters - treating them as spacebar).
>
> My patch detects when different letters on the keyboard are pressed and each triggers a different action, e.g., plays a tone / records and loops the tones currently playing / rearranges and remixes the sound in further ways using small degrees of randomness. Some of the output gets fed back in so it is a self-recycling / self-remixing kinda creature.
>
> I'm also thinking about using a mic on the keyboard to sample the tack of the keys into the remixy-mix as well. Maybe a contact mic so it can't pick up ambience or feed back. (PERS COMM, 22/3/2017)

His methodology was completely in sync with the way that both Angela and I worked on the book itself. On the allotted day he set up a laptop and a large speaker in the gallery; Angela read the *The Future, Unimagine* to our audience and then Reuben proceeded to put his method to the test as a live performance, transcreating our print-performance into an ambient, reverberating sound-scape that could be felt through the body like paper-tooth on the fingers.[134] It was, for me, the chance to experience Eco's *open work* in action:

> A work of art, therefore, is a complete and closed form in its uniqueness as a balanced organic whole, while at the same time constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do not impinge on its unadulterable specificity. Hence every reception of a work of art is both an interpretation and a performance of it, because in every reception the work takes on a fresh perspective for itself. (1979: 49)

Musicians are very familiar with interpretation as a creative act, as translation and transcreation. So too, visual artists interpret works of literature freely, using them as direct subject matter, or a hooked idea, where mention of the author, title or a short quote is a shortcut that extends the conceptual reach of the artwork. Writers seem most comfortable with creative interpretation when it takes the form of translation into another language, or when their ideas are hooked (and acknowledged) rather than directly re-used. Samuels and McGann encourage the reader to perform critical interpretation as a creative act, a radical, physical reworking of the words in front of them in order to connect the works to 'the everyday practice of imaginative life' (2001: 106). This is what Angela and I did with her text, and what Reuben did with ours.

As mentioned earlier, I plan to tour iterations of the exhibition (a number of unique works were purchased, and need to be substituted), but I also think documenting this particular exhibition is important, since the position and context of the space itself contributed strongly to the work's reception. I have produced a catalogue which will have a limited number of hard copies but is freely available online as a PDF at https://issuu.com/ampersandduck/docs/florance_readingspaces_2017.

134 The sound file is available here: https://reubeningall.bandcamp.com/track/sounding-working-papers (accessed 04/09/2017).

This project has never aimed for a neat conclusion, despite having an exhibition outcome that feels tied up with string. It has been a process of exploring pockets of tacit knowledge and of critically contextualizing studio practice in ways that provide me with a forward path, and should be useful to regional practitioners working in a country that has no clear book arts history or formally united circles of practice – or even strong, well-funded collecting institutions.

One of the biggest problems that letterpress practitioners seem to face is *what to print* once the equipment is found and arranged and the process negotiated. If one wants to make creative work other than commercial design jobbing work – wedding invitations, greeting cards, band posters – or artistic jobbing work – title pages and colophons for printmaking folios, text for artist books, illustrated broadsides – then the printer must find a direction/story/source of content. Many satisfy themselves with re-printing texts about letterpress history. A few have dedicated thematic practices: for example, Johanna Drucker (Druckwerk) works with linguistic schematics; Emily McVarish uses page-space as urban space; Jen Farrell (Starshaped Press) uses printer's ornaments to create landscapes and buildings; and Sue Anderson and Gwen Harrison work with Australian social history.[135] All but the last set of these printers are American; there are very few letterpress printers in Australia who have a dedicated *artistic* practice.

The predominant letterpress practice seems to be one of finding the *deja lu*, the 'already read', to reproduce. I call this 'source, set and print'. I have worked like this, and will certainly still use it, but my ambition for this research was to find ways to work with poetic text as it was being written, or at the very least, work with the poet's process to open up our respective pagespaces. I wanted to acknowledge that the very particular qualities of the handset letterpress process are similar to other forms of *composition*, but slowed to such a degree that it cannot help but become a form of close reading and creative deformance. My outputs, with Angela and Melinda and the other poets, perform on paper (and sometimes on screen) the experience of using the process, and it is clearly visible on every page.

My interest in the study of Material Bibliography and the history of the book continues to inform my approach to book-making, to a degree that has been hard to fully articulate in this relatively short exegesis (*IMAGE 107*). I firmly believe that the material book form will continue to adapt in unison with the internet, and will become – if anything – more experimental. I have been an active participant in conferences held

135 Johanna Drucker, Druckwerk: http://www.johannadrucker.net/books.html; Emily McVarish, Californian College of the Arts: https://www.cca.edu/academics/faculty/emcvarish; Jen Farrell, Chicago: http://www.starshaped.com/about/ (all accessed 04/09/2017); Sue Anderson & Gwen Harrison: see 1.2:34n32).

107 Pointing to the point: a hand-drawn manicule (and some incunable letterpress) from Pliny, *Letters*, 1492, handled at the Otago University Rare Book Summer School, February 2017. The notation *Luxuria fugito* loosely translates from the Latin as 'avoid excess'.

by the Bibliographic Society of Australia and NZ ever since my first attendance in 2009 when, in a session called 'The Limits of the Book', someone made a sneering remark about artist books disregarding the conventions of the book (i.e., the codex). I said then, and repeat now: our half-century (perhaps full century by the time this happens) of the artist book will one day be regarded as primary research into the displacement of the book by the computer as our primary vehicle of knowledge. Artists and forward-thinking bibliographers (and hybrids of the two like Drucker (2008b)) have been exploring historical and alternative formats, roles, and readings in ways that have directly informed the physical development of the internet and the e-reader. Commercial publishing is becoming more art-like.[136] Distinctions between currently siloed forms of publishing will eventually be simplified to just *analogue* and *digital* outputs, with many of them augmenting each other.

It was important to share the foundation story of the Graphic Investigation Workshop, as it is unique in Australian visual arts pedagogy. In this project I have drawn upon ideas gleaned from my GIW education, inspired by its mission to explore ways that differing practices could be united through collaborative projects, and its gradual identification of and commitment to the artist book as a vessel that can successfully unite and enrich intersections of practice and idea. Consequently I committed to the artist book for this project, but I have worked to extend even further outwards, to expand the boundaries of the artist book's publishing borders, edging into fine press, toe-dipping into the digital, leaping across to commercial formats, all as ways to explore

136 https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/apr/27/how-ebooks-lost-their-shine-kindles-look-clunky-unhip- (accessed 04/09/2017).

what happens to a concept when it is opened up and offered to different audiences. By doing so I also respected the desires of my collaborators, who wanted to be able to distribute this new work within their own poetry networks.

As stated at the beginning of Section 1.2, my new knowledge in this practice-led research is the body of artwork, the physical manifestation of years of studio play, studio thinking and studio process, grouped under the exhibition title *Reading Spaces*. The *understandings* that emerged from the research and relationships connected to the work are also contributions to the various fields that I straddle. My writing in this exegesis has been a braiding, pulling together many ideas to fit within the limitations of a relatively short document. I will tease many of them out further as my research into the material poetics and the cross-disciplinary 'poetentialities' of print-performance continues, but as a proper conclusion, it is useful to summarise the useful ones.

UNDERSTANDINGS

1. That the material artist book (in the broadest sense of the term, as a form of creative publishing incorporating subcategories such as art book, photobook, fine press book and zine) with its unfettered capacity to respond to materials, situations, and constellations of artistic practice, is a robust and generous research vessel. It is able to accommodate a wide variety of questions, texts, interactions, and unfoldings. It is a mapping of societal and informational change, and is not separate to the digital realm, but deeply connected and augmentative.

2. That there are commonalities between the poetics of the book and the practice of poetry itself: poetry is also a mapping of societal shiftings, a sharp, observational use of language that, like the book, is endlessly evolving within a system of traditional frameworks. I have identified a faultline in the use of poetry in creative publication: that poets are often left out of the equation, used as a resource (often without proper acknowledgement) and overlooked as creative artists who have their own working relationship with the space of the page. My project attempted to acknowledge and redress this, at least in my own practice.

3. That collaboration is complex and contingent. Balancing my own knowledge with that of each collaborator's distinctly individual creative practice, allowing them to have a clear, personal voice without losing my own, has been the core of this project. Research that categorises types of collaboration always stresses that the categories are fluid, that they can combine and mutate to form something that suits each particular situation, like 'strange new beasties with strawberry hides/ velvet green antlers, undulant necks,/ tentacles, wings, and the senses of bees'.[137] In this case, the aim was to avoid the arms-length distance of ekphrasis: we met in the compositional space and pushed each other's professional boundaries to transcreate rather than translate (see

137 Marge Piercy, 'Witnessing a wedding', from "My Mother's Body," (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1985).

1.2: 41-44). An important part of collaboration is that it is undertaken with a healthy and open acknowledgement of the possibility of failure:

> Students who apply the trial and error principle learn not only how to explore, but also what their limitations are, and hence what skills they need to develop. (Brien, Burr & Webb, 2013: 4)

Indeed, moments of studio process that could in any way be seen as 'failure' became generative problem-solving. Our collective professional experience could shift a problem into a new strategy, but without this element of risk, collaboration moves into the realm of service provision.

4. That handset letterpress, like most analogue printmaking processes, has particular performative qualities that arise from its physical properties. I have termed this capacity 'print-performance', something that can materially contribute to 'page-performance' (design that adds voice and/or movement to a page) (see 1.2: 54-57). Being a text-based process, it can extend contemporary thinking about the materiality of writing, close reading, and poetics. The actions of letterpress allow it to serve the theoretical and metaphorical exploration of themes like time, tactility, labour, weight, wear, repetition, damage, nostalgia, sound, conversation, frustration, concentration, care, construction, loss... through both the *doing* (experiential studio time) and the *done* (the resulting artefact). It can be approached as a design tool, and a printmaking process, and has the capacity to augment contemporary print processes thanks to its capacity to transfer ink to a wide variety of surfaces, including photographic papers.

5. That a studio of creative equipment (print or otherwise) is not just a room: it is a *network of distributed cognition* (see 1.2:51-52), where tools (such as presses and type) are never 'mastered' but are continually negotiated and have their own creative influence upon outcomes, making their own distinct contributions. The material concerns of the studio, the physical constraints (such as font limitations or size restrictions), can be repositioned as creative constraint, where solutions present themselves through problem-solving. This is also a way of working sustainably: making do creatively with what is available rather than turning to solutions that create waste.

6. That quality interaction with artist books and other performative publications depends upon supportive, supervised reading environments that allow more than a single tableau page opening to the audience. This is widely recognised, but not widely practised outside of special collection libraries. My strategy of presenting a variety of reading supports, each one 'introducing' the kind of reading optimal to the relevant form, proved successful, with visitors spending much longer in the exhibition than they had expected or anticipated.

7. Perhaps the most important understanding is that the history and development of Australian creative book history and pedagogy needs to be documented. Our stories are different from those of the northern hemisphere. This is why I included an account

of the Graphic Investigation Workshop: not only did it influence my own creative trajectory, but it contributed significantly to contemporary book culture in Australia, and like so many other pre- and early-internet entities, is in danger of having its importance overlooked. Conferences such as Focus on Books (Artspace Mackay) and ABBE (QCA, Brisbane) help but there are rarely published outcomes.[138]

These understandings feel like a manifesto: quest, interrogate, learn, share, negotiate, experience, remember. They started as desire lines for me and formed clearer pathways by the end. Others will find their own understandings in my work. Through these pathways I have forged stronger relationships with my collaborators: together we learned to push words into the service of materiality and *vice versa*. Our work has resulted in further plans for collaboration, because we found our joint activities satisfying and energising.

Each of the works made in this three-year project has been made in the spirit of opening and extending, not capturing, ideas. There has never been one objective or one solution. There were always other possible outcomes. Each idea has found different audiences, who in turn may extend their reach by seeing their own alternative outcomes. These works may all be revisited in the future, or not; without a doubt they have sparked a way of working that will be fruitful, open to change and negotiation, and focused on collaborative materialities.

138 Like with many other online records of Australian book events, Artspace Mackay removed all archives of these forums from their website after an 'upgrade'. ABBE hopefully will last longer: http://artistsbooksbrisbaneevent.blogspot.com.au/

re-work

NB: All websites listed here were accessed 11/01/2018.

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WEBB, J. & HETHERINGTON, P. 2016a. Slipperiness, Strange Attractors, and Collaborative Sociability. *Axon: Creative Explorations,* 6. Online: http://axonjournal.com.au/issue-10/slipperiness-strange-attractors-and-collaborative-sociability.

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WILSON, J. T. 1984. Paperwork. In: Lockwood, K. (ed.) *Craft Australia Yearbook 1984*. Sydney: Crafts Council of Australia. 91-101.

WIMBLE, F. T. c. 1930. *Specimens: Australian Type & Borders,* Sydney, F.T Wimble & Co, Limited.

OTHER WEBSITES

ABBE (Artist Book Brisbane Event), QCA: http://artistsbooksbrisbaneevent.blogspot.com.au/

Allbids online auction (table): https://www.allbids.com.au/auctions/681445/newspaper-reading-table-designed-by-arthur-robinson

BBC News on Sue Anderson & Gwen Harrison: http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-australia-32429132/australian-pair-keep-book-making-alive.

Bibliotheca Librorum apud Artificem (Monica Oppen's private library) Bibliotheca http://www.bibliotheca.org.au

British Library blog (white gloves) http://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2011/08/white-gloves-or-not-white-gloves.html

Canberra civics education program: http://www.pacer.org.au/

DRUCKER, J., *Druckwerk*: http://www.johannadrucker.net/books.html

ENO, B. Oblique Strategies: http://stoney.sb.org/eno/oblique.html.

Eurostile font: http://typedia.com/explore/typeface/eurostile/

FARRELL, J. About: http://www.starshaped.com/about/; ornaments: http://www.starshaped.com/custom-work-2/ and http://www.starshaped.com/custom-work-2/#/the-alphabet-machine/

GIW Catalogue, online: http://anulib.anu.edu.au/using-the-library/collections/rare-books-special-collections-and-manuscripts/petr-herel-collection/ (accessed 2 June 2017).

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Guardian, the (ebooks): https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/apr/27/how-ebooks-lost-their-shine-kindles-look-clunky-unhip-

Ingram Spark POD: http://www.ingramspark.com/plan-your-book/print/book-types.

Material Poetics room brochure: https://issuu.com/ampersandduck/docs/matpo_anca2016_web

McVARISH, E.: https://www.cca.edu/academics/faculty/emcvarish

Moulthrop's redundant weblink: http://iat.ubalt.edu/moulthrop/essays/404.html *(still not working :))*

Murdoch, J.S. and OPH: https://www.moadoph.gov.au/collection/the-building/design-and-construction/

NGV Art Book Fair: https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/whats-on/programs-events/art-book-fair/

Onomatopee book store, Netherlands: http://www.onomatopee.net/

Prime Minister's Literary Awards: https://www.arts.gov.au/pm-literary-awards/current-awards

PSCC: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-07/facebook-liking-anti-government-posts-could-cost-public-service/8780660

Reading Spaces catalogue: https://issuu.com/ampersandduck/docs/florance_readingspaces_2017

Recent Work Press: http://recentworkpress.com/.

Trove: http://trove.nla.gov.au/

Typograph Journal: http://www.typographher.com/typographjournal/.

Volume (book fair): http://vaabf.com/about/

Ward, F.: http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/ward-frederick-charles-cecil-fred-15863

Wimble, F. T. biography: http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wimble-frederick-thomas-13250

Yau, C. 2010. Know Your Type: Baskerville. http://idsgn.org/posts/know-your-type-baskerville/.

You Are Here (Canberra): http://youareherecanberra.com.au/accessibility/accessible-format-program/.

CREATIVE PUBLICATIONS

All works exhibited in Reading Spaces are listed in Appendix 2.

AITKEN, A. 2012. Drawing the Step. NY.: Women's Studio Workshop. Etching, letterpress, CD, birch wood covers.

APOLLINAIRE, G. 1918. *Calligrammes*. Online: https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2014/02/27/apollinaires-visual-poetry/. Colophon: https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Apollinaire_-_Calligrammes.djvu/206.

ATHERTON, C. & DAY, P. 2015. *Sketch Notes 1, 2, and 3.* Melbourne, VIC, Mountains Brown Press.

DISNEY, D. & WARWICKER, J. 2016. *Report From a Border.* Maleny, Qld, lighttrap press.

CAMPBELL, D. 1979. *The Man in the Honeysuckle.* Sydney, Angus & Robertson.

CAMPBELL, D. & DOBSON, R. 1975. *Moscow Trefoil.* Canberra, ANU Press.

CARDEW, G. 1984. *Requiem to an Epidermis*. Canberra. Handmade paper, pencil, unique.

CROCKFORD, B. 1994. *Orpheus*. Canberra: GIW. 3D collage book installation, concertina book, unique. Text by Vladimír Holan and the artist. GIWCR_1994: 219 (14); GIWML_61.

CROFT, C. 1983. *Sketch-of-Book*. Melbourne, Vic. etchings on handmade paper, accordion-folded, fixed in wooden frame, cloth-covered slipcase, edition of 5.

CUTTS, S. 2013. *Letterpress: new & material poems.* Devon, UK, Uniformbooks.

DISNEY, D., WARWICKER, J. 2016. *Report from a Border*. Maleny, Qld, lighttrap press.

DOBSON, R. 2009. *Poems to Hold or Let Go*, Canberra: Ampersand Duck. Poems by Rosemary Dobson, with wood engravings by Rosalind Atkins. Fine press volume. Relief letterpress (polymer), wood engravings, printed quarter-bound case binding with handset letterpress dust-jacket, edition of 200.

DOBSON, R. & CAMPBELL, D. 1979. *Seven Russian Poets,* St Lucia, University of Qld Press.

DRUCKER, J. 2013a. *Diagrammatic Writing*. Digital, laser-printed pamphlet. US, Ubu Editions. Online: http://ubumexico.centro.org.mx/text/vp/drucker_diagrammatic_writing_2013.pdf

DRUCKER, J. 2013b. *Stochastic Poetics*. Letterpress on paper, paper jacket, sewn. US: Ubu Editions/ Horn Press. Online: http://www.rondpointprojects.org/basesverbales/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/drucker_stochastic_poetics_2012.pdf.

DRUCKER, J. 1990. *The History of the/my Wor(l)d*. Letterpress on paper, two sections sewn into paper jacket. Harvard University: Druckwerk.

FLORANCE, C. 2013. *WYSIWYG*. Canberra. Letterpress, papercut, hardbound, edition of 3.

FLORANCE, C. 2013. *The One who Stopped*. Canberra. Letterpress, wax, fabric dye, found book, variable edition of 3. Text by Sarah Rice.

FLORANCE, C. 2013. *Scaremongrel*. Canberra. Letterpress poster. Online: http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/182914972?selectedversion=NBD51766462. Text composed with Zoe Bowman.

FLORANCE, C., GARDNER, A., ETC. 2014. *Transference*. Canberra. Typewriters, carbon, Yellowtrace, variable edition of 2.

FRASCARELLI, C. 2016. *Sydney Road Poems,* Melbourne, Rabbit Poets.

HARRISON, G., ANDERSON, S. 2011. *Quaranta Australis,* Sydney. Letterpress, intaglio printing, bound in kangaroo vellum, clamshell box, variable edition of 4.

HEREL, P., CARDEW, G., WADLINGTON, H. 1984. *Stigmata*. Canberra. Handmade aper, nails, cloth-covered case.

INGALL, R. 2017. *Sounding/Working Papers*. Canberra. Sound file. Online: https://reubeningall.bandcamp.com/track/sounding-working-papers

JARVIS, J., HUDSON, M. 1997. *Dada Kamphen um Leben und Tod*. Katoomba, NSW, Wayzgoose Press. Letterpress, concertina, edition of 34.

JONES, P. & O'MARA, P. 2008. *Subtext / A Free-Dragging Manifesto [How to do Words with Things],* Melbourne, Tree-Elbow Publications.

MALLARMÉ, S. 2015. *Un Coup de Dés jamais n'abolira le Hansard*, trans. R. Bononno & Jeff Clark US, Wave Books.

LEWIS, R. 1991. *TH WA WI NEVE EN*. Sydney, ONORAP ESS. Letterpress, drawing, edition of 150.

MALLARMÉ, S. 1965. *Mallarmé*, trans. Anthony Hartley. London, Penguin Books Ltd.

McDONALD, N. 2007. *Transmigration*. Canberra, Ampersand Duck. Poems by Nan McDonald, with embossed drawings by Jan Brown. Hand-set letterpress, relief images printed with photopolymer plate, printed quarter-bound case binding, edition of 90. Edition of 90.

McMASTER, R., HARRISON, G., MONTEBELLO, L., MELLOR, D., WOLF, KELLEHER, M., FOGWELL, F., PIKE, M. 1997. *Red Socks*. Canberra, GIW. 14 multiple plate etchings, letterpress, hardbound, edition of 10. Poem by RM, original text by others. *GIWCR_326; GIWML_111.*

McVARISH, E. 1995. *Wards of Obsolescence.* US, San Francisco. Letterpress, softbound.

MICHAUX, H. 1951. *The Space Within: Selected Writings*, trans. Richard Ellmann. France, New Directions Books.

RUSCHA, E. 1963. *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations*. US: National Exelsior Press.

SCHELL, K. 1994. *Orpheus*. Canberra: GIW. Etchings, letterpress, sewn flaps, hard cover, edition of 4. Text by Vladimír Holan. *GIWCR_258; GIWML_49.*

SHAKESPEARE, W. 1606. *King Lear*. In: *The Tudor Edition of William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (1966). UK: Collins Clear-Type Press.

VAN VEEN, M. 1980. *Song of the Earth Spirit*. Canberra: CSA GIW. Slate prints, letterpress, unbound, edition of 5. Text: Navaho Indian Prayer. *GIWCR_2; GIWML_5*

WAY, R. 1984. Vicious Triangle. Canberra, GIW. Handmade paper, twigs, string, unique. *GIWCR_49.*

WILD, J. 1999. *The Cartomancer in Exile,* Tasmania, Lasting Impressions. Screenprint, folio binding, edition of 15.

WILKINSON, J. L. 2014. *Suite for Percy Grainger,* Sydney, Vagabond Press.

WILKINSON, J. L. 2012. Marionette: a Biography of Miss Marion Davies, Sydney, Vagabond Press.

WOLF, J. 1994. *Orpheus*. Canberra: GIW. 8 turps release prints, letterpress, 3 loose sections in paper cover, edition of 3. Text by Vladimír Holan. *GIWCR_1994: 211; GIWML_140*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

Altered book: an artwork that originates from an already published book. It may be still functional as a book or it may be transformed into a static sculptural object.

Art book: a more designed sector of creative book publishing, influenced strongly by the simple aesthetic of the conceptual artist books of the 1960s and 70s. They have their own 'art book fairs' (like Volume at Artspace in Sydney, or the National Gallery of Victoria's annual fair[1]). The genre includes zines and zine culture but separates itself carefully from 'artist books' without denying outright a connection to artist books. It might be fair to say that machine-based print technologies, whether contemporary or retro, productive or reproductive, are a defining element of the genre, with a careful distance from craft aesthetics when using the term 'hand-made'.

Artist book: a field of creative bookmaking with contested boundaries and multiple definitions. For example: a book made by an artist (or multiple artists); a book that is an original work of art; a book that questions/investigates/challenges the conventions of the book. However, this is a viewpoint positioned from within the field; there seems to be a contemporary (and perhaps only local) attitude coming from galleries and design practitioners that 'artist books' are connected to overt materiality, craft and the 'handmade'.

Bibliographic code: everything about a published book that isn't the content: paper type, font choice, ink colour/s, margin widths, etc. It also includes price, print run, publisher, perceived audience. It is a variety of factors that 'point… to the work's presence in time and space' (Bornstein, 1999: 31).

Bon-a-tier proof: The printmaking equivalent of a publisher's 'send to print' proof: a *bon-a-tier* print is the ideal last-stage print which demonstrates the standard that every print in the edition must replicate.

Boutique press: a letterpress business that produces stationery products and bespoke work like personalised wedding invitations. See also *jobbing printer*.

Carbon paper: transfer paper, enabling copies to be made when typing or drawing. A dry, wax-fixed pigment is transferred via pressure. Blue is traditionally for writing, black for typing. Other colours are used for pattern-making (red, green, blue) and relief printing (grey).

Cast relief plates: metal (zinc, brass or magnesium) or plastic (photopolymer) relief plates which need to be packed to type high (.918") to use on letterpress machines. Metal plates have been produced for over a century; plastic emerged in the late 1980s. Both can be generated from computer files and can be used for colour separations. Most contemporary letterpress uses plate technology rather than movable type.

1 Volume: http://vaabf.com/about/; NGV Art Book Fair: http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/whats-on/programs-events/art-book-fair-2017/ (accessed 04/09/2017).

Chapbook: related to the chapter. Traditionally, a single folded *signature* of rarely no more than 32 pages (depending on the paper stock and how thick the fold makes the signature), caught together by a stitch or a staple, with a soft card cover. A contemporary chapbook is more likely to be a small *perfect-bound* book.

Codex: traditional western book structure of papers folded and caught together in a cover, able to open to a double page spread.

Colophon: akin to the copyright page in a commercial book, the colophon is a statement of production details. It could be as simple as the printed name and signature(s) of the maker(s), the date and the edition number; other desirable details (from a collector's point of view) include the materials and processes used, the place of production and any acknowledgements. It is usually situated within the book, at the back.

Composition stick: also 'setting stick', or just 'stick'. A hand-held tool that can be adjusted to form the width of the longest line of a block of type. The letters are set to this width until they are firm in the stick and thus all the same line length. *Justification* can be achieved by the distribution of spacing in the stick.

Composition: the act of combining parts to create a whole. The word is shared by writers and printers: a letterpress compositor is someone who physically sets up text and its spaces in metal or wood type. Computer layout of text is also composition.

Craft printers: printers who prioritise, often in a nostalgic manner, the traditional letterpress process and its history in their output.

Creative deformance: disruptive reading practices for enhanced creative interpretation suggested by McGann & Samuels: '*reordering* (e.g., reading backward), *isolating* (e.g., reading only verbs or other parts of speech), *altering* (exteriorizing variants – potential versions – of words in the work; or altering the spatial organization, typography, or punctuation of a work), and *adding* (perhaps the most subjective of our deformative poetics)' (2001: 117).

Design book: see *Art book*.

Détournement: coined by Guy Debord and the Situationist International (SI) movement of the 1960's. 'Diversion', 're-routing', 'derailment' are all translations, as is the phrase *uncreative writing*: turning source texts against themselves, subverting institutional messages, undermining propaganda.

Distribution: In printing terms, this is the putting away of movable *type*, also called redistribution, and dissing. In bibliographic terms, distribution is the economic movement of books.

Facture: material 'indications in an artifact of its having been made' (Summers, 2003: 684); using material evidence to determine means of construction.

Faktura: derived from Russian icon painting and appropriated by Constructivist collage artists, it is a word used to discuss the surface texture of visual work, or 'the visual dimension of a given text' in poetry (Perloff, 2006:259).

Fine press book: a limited edition publication in which equal attention has been paid to the production processes, material qualities and content. Connected to *Private press* and *Small press*, but 'fine press' is an indicator of quality not of the kind of publisher.

Flarf: a genre of found poetry that emerged in the early 21st century, with practitioners creating poems from internet texts, often using search algorithms. See also *uncreative writing*.

Forme: a complete, locked-up composition (words, spaces, along with any other elements for that print run, like blocks or rules), to be secured onto the press for printing.

Gestetner: Pre-computer stencil-based duplication, other types were mimeograph machines, and risographs. The latter are back in use thanks to their capacity to generate stencils by a computer.

Gutter: the spine margin; the space between the textblocks of two facing pages.

Jobbing printer: one who undertakes printing jobs for money, usually acknowledged if a work has a *colophon*, but also used as invisible labour for artists or small presses.

Justification: the position of type: right, left, centred. When set by hand, the spaces are placed accordingly: for left justification, the spaces fill on the right. When centred, the spaces have to be evenly divided on either side of the words. Full justification means that the letters extend to the full width of the line, which means variable spacing between the words and also sometimes between the letters.

Letraset: transferable plastic film lettering, fixed to paper and film surfaces by rubbing with a firm implement. Widely available in many fonts during the 1970s and 80s for graphic design pre-press production, it was made obsolete by the computer but is still available today in limited designs.

Letterpress: a relief-printing system of movable type invented in the 14th century and used commercially until the early twentieth century when photography enabled more efficient reproductive technologies. Small commercial printeries were still using handset letterpress for small jobs until the advent of the personal computer in the 1980s. Letterpress presses are different to relief presses because they are set to 'type high' (.918") which is the depth of a piece of type from base to face. See also *Cast relief plates*.

***Livre d'artiste*:** Also known as 'Livre de Peintre' (painter's books). Deluxe limited edition books with high production values that combine poetry or short literary texts with original art usually produced by printmaking techniques. This genre emerged in the 1890s in France and differentiates itself from the British fine press style by its visual integration of text & image, often incorporating calligraphic or hand-written text via lithography or photopolymer plate.

Makeready: the (often many) small adjustments made to ensure a clean print: for example, extra paper packed underneath the paper to be printed; the packing of the *tympan*; small slips of thin paper underneath the type or block to raise it slightly, extra spacing leads inserted between letters or lines to add white space.

Makeready proofs: prints pulled while making *makeready* adjustments, usually over the top of each other to save paper and to gauge the shift in registration.

Manicule: a symbol of a hand, pointing its index finger, often depicted with a sleeve cuff. Originally hand-drawn as marginalia in illuminated manuscripts and incunabula, as a form of highlighting and placemarking, akin to an asterisk.

Material poetics: a siting of meaning within materiality and the particular openings that materials and materiality can offer to creative process.

Mezzotint: laborious intaglio printmaking process where a deep, rich black is generated by comprehensively stippling the surface of the plate with needled points, creating a blanket of burred metal. The image is then created by burnishing (smoothing) back the burrs to create white areas.

Perfect binding: a complete misnomer. Perfect binding, also known as burst binding, is the glueing together of a block of single sheets instead of stitching, to form a spine. Originally for soft or paperback covers, an 'improved' process of sawing through the spine and injecting glue means that most contemporary hardbacks are also glued.

Photobook: a single-themed book of photography. This curated strand of authorial focus differentiates it from an album, and situates it in the field of artist books.

Press imprint: the business name of a publishing enterprise. A press may have an umbrella name over a number of imprints, allowing various streams of output, but often the imprint is also the name of the private or small press.

Private press: a publishing operation independent of mainstream commercial pressures, technically amateur. The term is synonymous with letterpress printing but the process is not a mandatory element of private press publishing. Often sole operated or with a small team, and the means of printing are independently owned.

Ronio: pre-computer spirit-based duplication process.

Sculptural books: book-works that do not have the functional movement of books; they are static and are usually displayed on the wall, on plinths or in the landscape.

Small press: a small publishing operation, centring upon design, production and distribution. The means of production is often outsourced, and output can be commercial.

Solvent Release: a printmaking process of transferring images from a photocopy to another surface (e.g., paper or cloth) by releasing the toner with a solvent chemical like mineral turpentine or eucalyptus oil.

Textura: the feel of a physical page, which would also reveal the paper quality.

Transcreation: a word that acknowledges the impossibility of pure translation, and establishes the possibility of creative translation: a new creative entity formed from interpreting an original. See de Campos & Gibson (2007 [1963]) and Cisneros (2012).

Tympan: The layers of paper or other material added to a press platen or cylinder to adjust the pressure of the printing and to protect the machine.

Type: Individual letters used for printing, available in a multitude of font designs and families. Metal type is cast in to particular standard sizes, up to 72pt; wooden type takes over for larger sizes to save on weight (but is available at smaller sizes as well). Western type is distinguished by height; standard is .918"(except the French Didot, which is higher at .929").

Uncreative writing: a term used by Kenneth Goldsmith (2011) to distinguish a practice of using found texts creatively. Asssociated terms are flarf, conceptual poetry and found poetry. See also *détournement*.

Washi: Asian paper, of varying weights, textures and sizes, united by their soft strength created by the use of plants that have long fibres (rice, bamboo, grasses) which are manipulated to lie within the sheet multidirectionally (unlike western paper which uses short fibres in a definite grain direction).

Xerox: photocopy; derived from xerography, or 'dry writing'. The Xerox corporation name became synonymous with the process.

Zine: Derived from *fanzine*, itself derived from *magazine*. Broad genre of amateur publishing, typified by a material output with low production values and utilising cheap reproduction methods. Not exclusively art-based, the form straddles many forms of writing including biography, poetry, research, humour and politics.

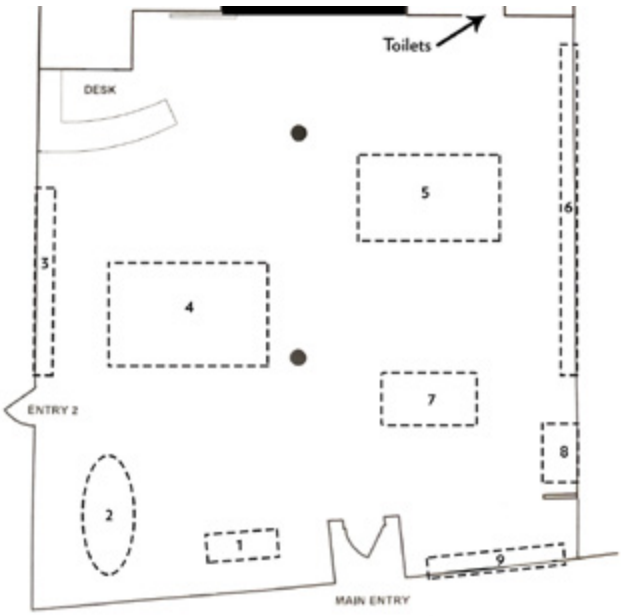
Reading Spaces catalogue cover, published September 2017.

Caren Florance (etc): Reading Spaces

East Space, Commonwealth Place, Canberra
5–12 April 2017

LIST OF WORKS

All measurements in mm, h x w x d
All the works can be touched.
Please make sure you have clean hands: wet wipes are available at the desk.



Area 1: *Solitary reading 1*

Tracer: you are here, 2016, Owen Bullock, Caren Florance & Louise Curham
Letterpress, rubber stamp, sewn super8 film on paper. Unique.
450 x 500, 20pp.
$500

Area 2: *Mobile words*

Pleasure Demolition, 2016, Caren Florance & Angela Gardner.
Letterpress, various paper, thread, pole. Edition of 2.
Two poems from the 2009 series 'Notes to Architects': 'Pleasure Grounds' and Demolition'. c250 x 200 x 30cm (dimensions variable)
$500

Area 3: *Wall reading 1*

Secret Life, 2014, Melinda Smith & Caren Florance.
Digital broadside on archival photo paper. 594 x 420, edition of 5.
$350 (fr), $200 (unfr)

Be Spoken To, 2014, Melinda Smith & Caren Florance.
Letterpress and embossing powder, Perspex (originally installed on the faces of MoAD vintage signs). Dimensions variable.
POA

Area 4: *Book lounge*

The Future, Unimagine, 2017, Angela Gardner & Caren Florance in association with Recent Work Press. Chapbook, 203 x 228, 48pp.
$10ea

Members Only, 2017, Melinda Smith & Caren Florance in association with Recent Work Press. Chapbook, 203 x 228, 48pp.
$10ea

Swipe, 2015, Caren Florance, Owen Bullock, Monica Carroll, Tania de Rozario, Angela Gardner, Philip Gross, Nicci Haynes, Jacqui Malins, Paul Munden, Shags, Melinda Smith, Shane Strange, Jen Webb. Hand-sewn zine, c.199 x 140, 16pp.
$4ea, $45 set

Interference, 2014, Angela Gardner, etc.
Handsewn chapbook, 210 x 130, 24pp.
$20ea

Tracer, 2015, Owen Bullock
Handsewn chapbook, 280 x 100, 24pp.
$20ea

Assorted other reading matter is support material:
articles on or by Caren Florance & poetry books designed for UC.

Area 5: *Formal reading*

Working Papers: hone & torrent, 2015–17, Angela Gardner & Caren Florance. Letterpress and drawing on Gyokurya washi, unbound, housed in archival polyprop boxes. 350 x 250 x 10. Variable edition of 3: AG:CF (x2), AG:CF:AG.
$2500ea

1962: Be Spoken To, 2014–17, Melinda Smith & Caren Florance. Letterpress and screenprint on Magnani Avoria Vergata paper, 2 parts, handsewn in archival Tyvek 'ghost bag'. Edition of 5.
505 x 357 x 14, 8 + 48pp.
$2500ea

Area 6: *Wall reading 2*

Jostles, 2016, Caren Florance & Angela Gardner.
Large scale digital reprints of details from *Working Papers*.
Toner on Tyvek, 841 x 1189.
$50ea

Area 7: *Kitchen table*

Touch to Activate, 2015, Caren Florance. Letterpress & offset ink on paper, trifold. Variable edition of 12. Light and dark variants on display.
300 x 200, 6pp.
$75ea

Touch 00100000, 2016, Caren Florance.
Spiralbound typed book, jar, tweezers. Unique. 297 x 220 x 20
$200

Redex, 2014, Caren Florance & Owen Bullock. Letterpress on Whitetrace, Edition of 160, 130 were for the *Parenthesis* 27 Deluxe Folio. 207 x 205, 4pp.
$200ea

Proseity, 2015. Caren Florance.
Hardback Blurb artist book of reproduced offset letterpress.
200 x 130 x 7, 24pp. Available from
http://au.blurb.com/b/6128284-proseity-poems
$40.10 pph

Area 8: *Solitary reading 2*

Shared Rooms: Poems by Anna Akhmatova with Translations by Natalie Staples and Imitations by Rosemary Dobson and David Campbell, 2002, Caren Florance. Letterpress and monoprints on Zerkall wove paper. Edition of 5. 620 x 315 x 32.
$1000

Area 9: *Digital reading*

Vitreous Syneresis (I see you sometimes), 2014, Caren Florance & Sarah Rice. Eight manipulated digital prints on archival rag paper, digital animation on iPad. 200 x 300. Edition of 10.
$100/photo,
$850 set + animation file.

APPENDIX 3: CV

CAREN FLORANCE

Biographical/Education

Born in Wagga, Australia
Lives and works Canberra, ACT

1989 BA (English/Classics), ANU
1992 MA(Pass) (English), UNSW Canberra
2002 BAVis(Hons), Printmedia & Drawing, ANU School of Art
2013–18 PhD, CCCR, FAD, University of Canberra

Research Profile

orcid: 0000-0003-0988-9996
researcherid: g-1872-2014
https://canberra.academia.edu/CarenFlorance

Exegesis: *Collaborative Materiality: poetry, poets, letterpress, artist books*.
Exhibition: *Reading Spaces*, April 2017.
Supervisors: Dist. Prof. Jen Webb, Dr Jen Crawford.

Positions

2017– Course Convenor, Visual Arts, TAFE QLD for UC
2015-16 Sessional lecturer (Typography), Arts & Design, University of Canberra
2006– Sessional lecturer (Book Design, Typography), ANU Printmedia & Drawing Workshop, ANU School of Art
2003–6 Technical Officer, Edition + Artist Book Studio, ANU School of Art

Constant: freelance designer, workshop instructor.

Solo Exhibitions

2017 *Reading Spaces*, East Space, ACT
2016 *Letter Ess*, CCAS City, ACT
2012 *Handset: Letterpress Poetry Broadsides*, UNSW Canberra Library, ACT
2010 *Prime*, Otakou Press, University of Otago Library, Dunedin, NZ
2009 *Pressings: Recycled Bookwork*, Megalo, ACT

Selected Curation

2016 *Material Poetics* (with Jen Webb), ANCA, ACT
2013 *Broad*, ANU SOA Foyer Gallery, ACT
100% Books by Canberra Artists, Watson Arts Centre, ACT
2009 *Books to Hold or Let Go*, Craft ACT

Selected Group Exhibitions

2017 *Nonesuch Art on Paper Awards*, Canada
Beauties and Beasts, Belconnen Art Space, ACT
Lines of Site: Finding the Sublime in Canberra, M16, ACT
Edge, ANU School of Art Foyer Gallery, ACT
Amplify & Multiply: Activist Ephemera, Coburn Gallery, Colorado US
2016 *Libris Award*, Artspace Mackay, QLD
Love is in the Air, CCAS, ACT
Seeking Refuge, Tuggeranong Arts Centre (TAC), ACT
The Encyclopaedia of Forgotten Things, Belconnen Arts Centre (BAC), ACT
Tracer (for You Are Here Festival), CMAG, ACT
Speak Uneasy, Smiths Alternative (for Noted Festival), ACT
2015 *Artists' Books*, Henglu Gallery, Hangzhou, China
Artists' Books + Zines Saved my Life! Spectrum Project Space, ECU, Perth
Traces & Hauntings, BAC, ACT
Between the Sheets, Gallery East, Perth WA
Fremantle Arts Centre Print Awards, WA
Small Publishers, Brenda May Gallery, Sydney NSW
2014 *Bespoke: Design for the People*, MoAD, ACT (on display for 12 months)
Mirror of the World: Books and Ideas, State Library of Victoria, VIC
Wordsmith, M16 Gallery, Canberra, ACT
Zinestars, TAC, ACT
Open Books Plus, Logan Gallery, QLD & UNSW Canberra Library, ACT
Unruly Orchestrations, BAC, ACT
2013 *Book Art Object*, UNSW Canberra Library, ACT
Book Art Object at Impact 8, Dundee, Scotland
Shaping Canberra, ANU School of Art Gallery
Inhabit, Craft ACT
Intensity of Purpose, CMAG, ACT
Libris Award 2013, Artspace Mackay, QLD
Community and Context, MADA Gallery, Monash University Caulfield, VIC
2012 *Merchants of War*, Damien Minton Gallery, Sydney NSW
Lessons in History II: Democracy, Grahame Galleries, Brisbane, Qld
2012 *Fremantle Arts Centre Print Awards*, WA
Transit of Venus, ANU Photospace, ACT
Freak of Nature, King Family Space, Uni of Colorado in Boulder, USA
Material World, ANCA, ACT
2011 *Book Art Object at Impact 7*, Monash Caulfield, VIC
2010 *Print Big*, Megalo @ the Fitter's Workshop, Kingston ACT
Libris Awards, Artspace Mackay, QLD
Paper Works, Brenda May Gallery, Sydney, NSW
3 Chords & the Truth, ANCA, ACT
2009 *Between the Lines*, Artisan Books, Melb VIC
Art-i-Techs, ANU School of Art Foyer Gallery, ACT
2008 *Into the Fold*, Artisan Books, Melbourne, VIC
Libris Award, Artspace Mackay, QLD
2007 *'How I entered there I cannot truly say': Collaborative Works from the ANU E+ABS*, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, VIC
2005 *Black & White Books*, Papermakers of Victoria, Artisan Books, Melbourne, VIC
2004 1*st International Seoul Book Arts Fair*, COEX, Seoul, South Korea.
2003 *Fremantle Arts Centre Print Awards*, WA

Awards and Residencies

2017 ANCA Critic-in-Residence 2018 ($1750 + extras)
2015 ANCA Art Writing Award ($500)
2014 MoAD/Craft ACT: Bespoke Project Residency ($1,000)
2012 Non-acquisitive Award (+ acquisition), Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award Supported by Little Creatures Brewing ($5,000)
2011 artsACT Artists-in-Schools, O'Connor Co-operative, ACT: Postmark Mail Art ($20,000)
2010 Printer-in-Residence, Otakou Press, Otago University Library, Dunedin NZ
2000 Encouragement Medal (Bronze), 2000 UNESCO Noma Concours for Picture Book Illustration for *Come and See!*, a letterpress picture book for preschoolers (unpublished).

Collections

British Library, UK
National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, UK
The Poetry Library, UK
Sanshang Contemporary Art Museum, China
UNESCO Noma Concours, Japan
University of Otago Library, NZ
National Gallery of Australia
National Library of Australia
State Library of Queensland
State Library of Victoria
Monash University Rare Books Collection
Melbourne University Rare Books Collection
University of Queensland Library
University of Sydney Library
University of WA Library
ACT Heritage Library
Canberra Museum and Galleries
Artspace Mackay
City of Fremantle Art Collection
UNSW Canberra
Petr Herel/GIW Collection, ANU
E+ABS Collection, ANU
National and international private collections

Selected commissions / collaborations / projects

2015/16 Typomania letterpress folio, Winckeldruckerey, Uelzen, Germany (project)
2015 Craft ACT, Accredited Members' gift brooch: commission
2013 GW Bot, *Glyph Metrics* (book): commission
2012 Bernie Slater, *Freedom* (book): collaboration.
2011 Mirabel FitzGerald, *Talking About Love* (book): commission
2010 byrd, *Demolition* (letterpress/graffiti performance collaboration).
Patsy Payne & Sarah Rice, *Those Who Travel* (book): collaboration.
2009 Simryn Gill, title page & colophon for *A Long Time Between Drinks* folio: commission.
2007 Petr Herel, *Livre des Fuites* (book), commission.
GW Bot, *Black Swan* (book): commission.

Professional memberships

CraftACT (Accredited Professional Member)
Australian Book Design Association (ABDA) (Professional Member)
UC Centre for Creative & Cultural Research (CCCR) (HDR Member)
Print Council of Australia (ACT Rep 2011–2015)
ANCA Board (2010–2013)
Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild (Editor 2007–2015; Vice-President 2012–2015)
Bibliographical Society of Australia & NZ
Megalo Print Studio & Gallery
NZ Association of Handcraft Printers

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Textual Poetics in this Small Corner. *Art Monthly*, 294, Nov 2016: 34-37.

Caren Florance reviews Dan Disney and John Warwicker. *Cordite Poetry Review*, 6 June 2016: http://cordite.org.au/reviews/florance-disney-warwicker/

This is not a poetry review. *Cordite Poetry Review*, 1 February 2016: http://cordite.org.au/essays/self-publishing-101/

Textual Activity in the Artist's Book. *Openings: Studies in Book Art*, 2.1, May 2016. http://journals.sfu.ca/cbaa/index.php/jcbaa/article/view/18/27

Machine Translations: Poets, Poetics and the Artists' Book. *JAB: Journal of Artists' Books*, 95 2016 21–24.

Review Short: Derek Beaulieu's *Kern. Cordite Poetry Review*, 12 April 2015: http://cordite.org.au/reviews/florance-beaulieu/

The Print-Performed Poem: Collaborative Material Poetics and the Artists' Book. *Proceedings of Impact 9 International Printmaking Conference Black Volume: Academic Papers, Illustrated Talks, Themed Panels* (China: China Academy of Art Press, 2015): 210–216.

The Changing Face of Contemporary Letterpress in Australia. *The LaTrobe Journal*, vol 95, March 2015: 64-76.

Studio Practice as Process. *Typograph.Journal* 2, 2014: 31-41.

Time for the Type. *Materiality*, 1.2, 2013.

One Hundred Years and On: 100% Books by Canberra Artists.*The Blue Notebook*, 8.1 October 2013: 17-26.

The Survival of Letterpress in Australia. *The Blue Notebook* 6.2, April 2012:10–18.

Franki Sparke: Rocking the Boat. *Imprint*, 46. 2001, 1: 2.

Stop the Press: the Allure of Ink. *Artlink* 30.2, 2010: 42-44.

Covering the Story. *Meanjin* 67.2, 2008: 28–34.

About/inclusions

McCarter, K. 2017. They will oxidise before you finish reading. *Overland* 227 Winter 2017.

Chen, J. 2013. *500 Handmade Books 2*, NY: Lark Books, 47: 276.

Schuller, A. 2013. A New Generation of Private Presses in Australia. *Matrix* 31: 85–93.

Mitchell, H. 2012. *The Vandercook 100*, US: Just Vandy: 20–21.

Oppen, M. & P. Lyssiotis. 2011. *The Silent Scream: Political and Social Comment in Books by Artists*, Sydney: Ant Press: 166–7.

Haynes, N. 2011. Caren Florance: Typographical Timelord. *Imprint* 46.2: 16.

Selected artist books

2017 *The Future, Unimagine* (with Angela Gardner, in association with Recent Work Press). Print-on-demand format: ISBN 978-0-99535-385-5.

2017 *Members Only* (with Melinda Smith, in association with Recent Work Press). Print-on-demand format: ISBN 978-0-99535-384-8.

2017 *Red Language*. Colour pencil on Whitetrace. Unique.

2017 *Tracer (you are here)* (with Owen Bullock and Louise Curran). Letterpress, rubber stamp, pen, thread on Whitetrace. Unique.

2015-17 *Working Papers: hone/torrent* (with Angela Gardner). Letterpress and drawing on Gyokurya washi. Unique.

2014-17 *1962: Be Spoken To* (with Melinda Smith). Letterpress and screenprint on Magnani rag paper. Edition of 5.

2016 *Pleasure Demolition* (poem by Angela Gardner). Letterpress, thread, pole.

2015 *Swipe* (ongoing collaborative zine series with poets & artists inc. Philip Gross, Nicci Haynes, Monica Carroll, Shagsy Shags, Paul Jacqui Malins, Munden, Owen Bullock, Tania de Rozario, Melinda Smith, Jen Webb). Photocopied paper, A5, handsewn.

2014 *Redex* (poem by Owen Bullock). Letterpress on whitetrace.
The One Who Stopped (poem by Sarah Rice). Letterpress, wax batik, fabric dye.
Interference (Angela Gardner, etc). Mobile phones, digital printing.

2013 *Out of Shape*. Poems by Sue Wootton. Letterpress on Magnani, unbound in printed paper wrapper. Edn 40.
WYSIWYG. Letterpress & papercut, casebound.

2012 *Dear Lady* (with Ros Atkins). 3-colour letterpress, wood engravings.

2010 *Learning Absence, 1986* (poem by Rosemary Dobson). Monoprints & letterpress.

2009 *Night Ladders (Escape, Grim, Vision, After)*. Papercut letterpress offcuts, found book covers.

2002 *Shared Rooms: Poems by Anna Akhmatova with Translations by Natalie Staples and Imitations by Rosemary Dobson and David Campbell*. Letterpress, monoprints on paper.

2000 *I am Writing to You From a Far-Off Country: Experiencing Henri Michaux*. Digital images, laserprints, pen & ink on paper, perspex cover. Unique.

1998 *Lingua Arcana Matrum (The Secret Language of Mothers)*. Letterpress, photocopy on paper and acetate, cloth, embroidery and plastic. Edn of 5.

1996 *Henry Michaux: 'Clown' and 'And More Changes Still'*. Laserprint on paper, handmade boxes. Unique.

Fine press books

2008 *Poems to Hold or Let Go*. Poems by Rosemary Dobson, wood engravings by Rosalind Atkins. Relief letterpress, relief printing and hand-binding, edn of 200.

2007 *Transmigration*. Poems by Nan McDonald, embossed drawings by Jan Brown. Hand-set letterpress, relief printing with polymer plate and hand-binding, edn of 90.

Contact details

m PO Box 392, Dickson ACT 2602
p 0402 105 245
e caren.florance@canberra.edu.au
w www.carenflorance.com

APPENDIX 4: RAW POETRY

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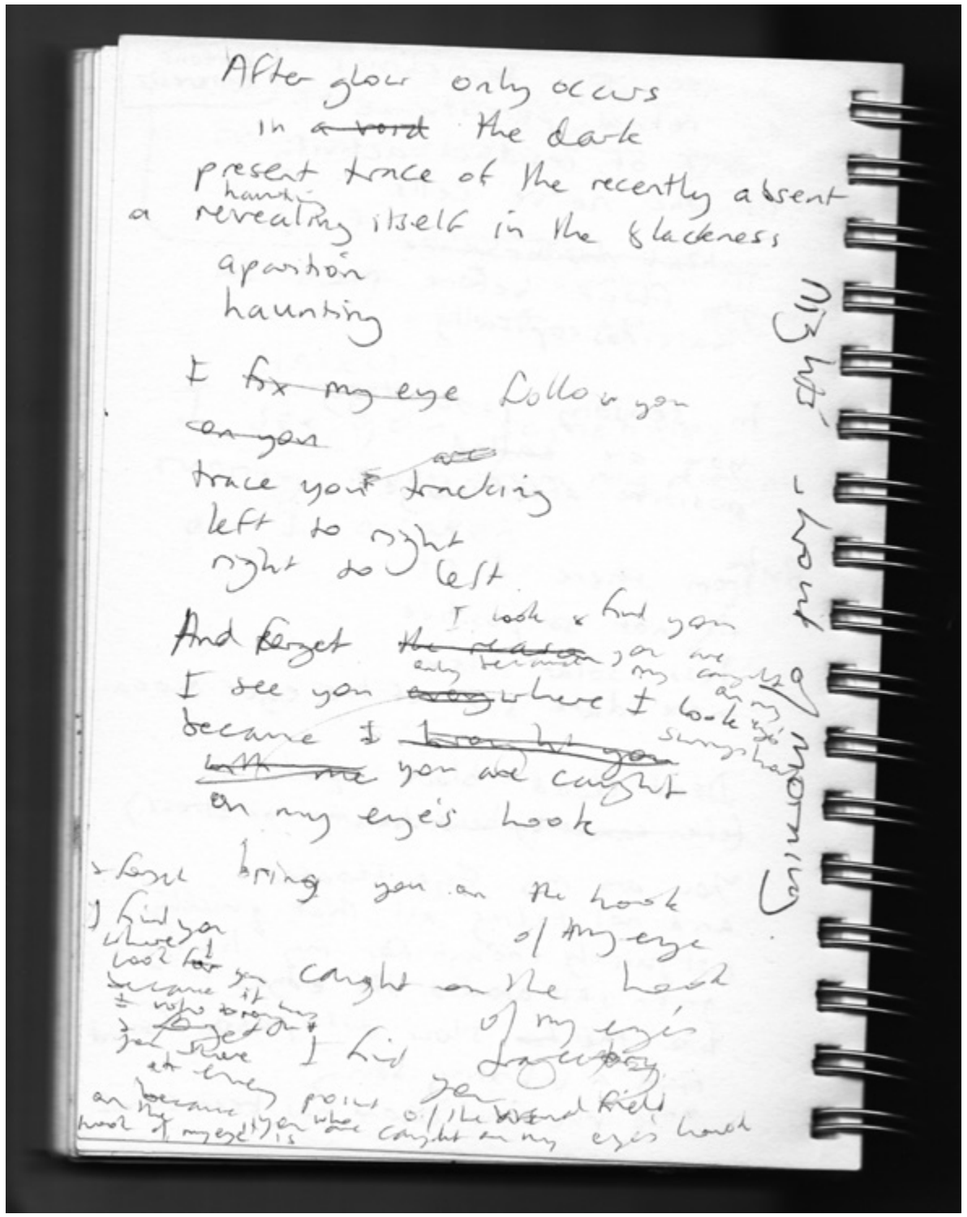
NB: The majority of poems are typeset here in two columns. Poems that read across the full page, if not obvious, will be marked.



Sarah Rice's notebook, showing a page of a draft of 'Vitreous Syneresis'.

SARAH RICE

The One Who Stopped

The one who stopped

silent on the nitrate
plagued by swarms
of flashes and scratches

flickering
over the stationary body
which seemed just able

to keep grasp
on the frame of being
risking the fall
back in to black
Minute deaths each millisecond
cutting
him a negative shadow

in time
Others walked on
Only he stopped
to look at his watch
He will stop over
and over for us
Though he stopped

a long time ago
giving us pause

Vitreous Syneresis (notebook to final)

Early note

The only way out
That's when the real
    trouble started
I see you sometimes

Next page: 1st draft nascent state (scrawl)

I see you sometimes
as retinal persistence
result of residual activity
of the nerve
cells on the back
of the eye
floating before me
kalidescopically [sic]

In sensory psychology
this effect is called a
positive afterimage

[arrow drawn from start of 'positive' to five lines down with head pointing at 'from']

– like the slow dissipation
of sound from a vibrating
string once the
chord has been struck

from ~~where~~ my internal
    psychology would perhaps
balk at the positive.
– more like a retinal shadow

– a black spot

[next page]

the dark side of the eye's
moon
You're not fading that quickly,
not quickly enough for
my liking, green
still around the edges

and ~~sort of~~ pulsating.
The afterglow ~~only~~ can only
occur in the dark
it is the present trace of
the recently absent,
but not in the day
light.

[right margin]

together
black spot
dead blood cells
bonding [?]

[resume main space]

not
but can only reveal itself
both in absence, in darkness,
in the blackness,
apparition [sic].
haunting.

[left margin, beside last two lines]

Head
trauma &
stress
aneurism [?]

[right margin]

vitreous
syneresis

[resume]

The answer is clear
don't stop staring into the light
no blinking.

[next page]

playing sun to my dark planet
orbiting my inward gaze
across,
I ~~follow~~ trace your ~~track~~ tracking
right to left
left to right
and forget that it is

you coming with me
as my eyes scan

– you move to my metronome

eye floater *[circled]*

& the really
I'd swear it is you moving
and I who follow
dumbly with my eyes
hooked to your

trajectory
& forget that it is you
~~who are locked~~
dragged this way and that
by my shifting gaze
searching

[next page]

I see you sometimes
running away from ~~me~~
my dream
as I awaken

[those above four lines circled]

as though I couldn't
even [unknown: trace? trap?] you ~~there~~

#

HAIKU *[written in clean print]*

I see you sometimes
running away from my dream
as I awaken

2nd draft: medium print clarity (firmer writing)

[title written in lower case in top right hand corner and framed by a line]

I see you sometimes
as retinal persistence [sic]
result of residual activity
of the nerve cells

~~optical disturbance~~

you float before me
kaleidoscopically

In sensory psychology
you are ~~called~~
positive afterimage

But from where I sit
~~it's~~ not so positive.
less solar flare
more dark side of the eye's moon

Dead blood black spot
~~(often caused by head trauma or stress)~~
You are my Eye Floater
and not fading all that quickly
not quickly enough for my liking
green still around the edges
like the slow dissipation of sound
from a vibrating string
once the final chord has been struck

[next page]

After glow only occurs
in ~~a void~~ the dark
present trace of the recently absent
haunting *[inserted above 'revealing']*

a revealing itself in the blackness
aparition [sic]
haunting

I ~~fix my eye~~ follow you
~~on you~~
trace your tracking
left to right
right to left

And forget ~~the reason~~
I see you ~~every~~where I look

[next lines are scrawled in right margin beside the above lines]

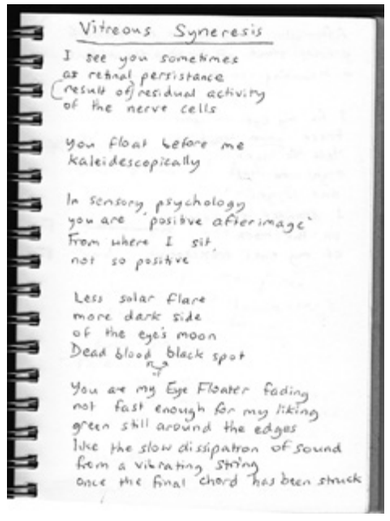
I look & find you
or are
only because any [?] caught
on my eye's [sways? swings?] hook

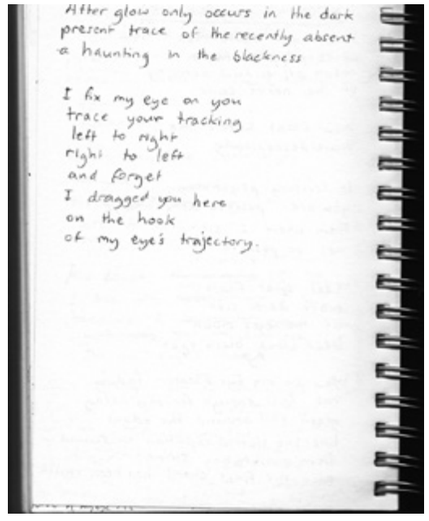
[resume]

because I brought you
with me you are caught
on my eye's hook

[rest of page is hesitant scrawl in two loose columns]

& force / bring you on the hook/ I find you/
of my eye / where / hook / look for ~~you~~ /
caught on the hook / because it was / of my
eye's / I who brought / & forget I hid /
trajectory / you there /you / at every point of
the *[uncertain: broad?]* field / because you who
are caught on my eye's hook/ on the / hook
of my eye it is





Last notebook draft: very clean printed handwriting (see image on previous page).

Vitreous Syneresis

I see you sometimes
as retinal persistence
[result of] residual activity
of the nerve cells

You float before me
kaleidoscopically

In sensory psychology
you are 'positive afterimage'
From where I sit,
not so positive

Less solar flare
More dark side
Of the eye's moon
Dead black of* blood spot

You are my Eye Floater fading
Not fast enough for my liking
Green still around the edges
Like the slow dissipation of sound
From a vibrating string
Once the final chord has been struck

Afterglow only occurs in the dark
Present trace of the recently absent
A haunting in the blackness

I fix my eye on you
Trace your tracking
Left to right
Right to left
And forget
I dragged you here
On the hook
Of my eye's trajectory.

* *['of' sits underneath a double-headed arrow pointing between the two phrases]*

'Final' draft: typed on computer, emailed to me by SR.

Vitreous Syneresis

I see you sometimes
as retinal persistence
residual activity
of the nerve cells

You float before me
kaleidoscopically

In sensory perception
you are *positive afterimage*
from where I sit
not so positive

Less solar flare
more dark side
of the eye's moon
dead blood black spot

You are my Eye Floater fading
not fast enough for my liking
green still around the edges
Like the slow dissipation of sound
from a vibrating string
once the final chord has been struck

After-glow only occurs in the dark
present trace of the recently absent
a haunting in the blackness

I fix my eye on you
trace your tracking
left to right
right to left
and forget
I dragged you here
on the hook
of my eye's trajectory.

OWEN BULLOCK

redex*

With thanks and apologies to Caren Florance, Lyn Ashby, Peter Rutledge Koch, Ulrike Stolz, Donald Kerr, Tim Mosely and Monica Oppen.

the plane shadowed
in a rainbow circle
in the cloud

coming into Melbourne
someone is singing
a thin layer of cloud
over the city

try to relax

reception
he says he's
arm fodder

To us as to the neighbour
who shares our rooms

our regional condition
origin story

Flinders Street – the printers
of small run magazines

Etel Adnan
the ninety-year old poet philosopher

ii

image & text
equal weight

to evoke a sense of
correspondence

envelopes
for personal choice

unbound:
a narrative
traps or animal traces

the momigami
grieving hold

I wake and feel the fell of dark not day

What will remain
when all this fades?

the embossed
straddles materials

Nicci Haynes
a print maker

pulsing & coalescing

pretext

geocaching

no order
a rotating machine

iii

energy independent
a syntropy

consciousness
begets language

representation
affects transmission

(Medium is the massage)

reading meditative
there is less

yes

an extension of eye

experiment with grammar
tweak the algorhythm
Lyn Ashby

* *This poem is based on the symposium* Codex Australia, *Melbourne 2014. Section ii uses my presentation.*

nexus:
language selfhood book

self of
translucent material

The Ten Thousand Things
everything made of
everything else

investigative
particles
inspecting grammar

perhaps it should have been
a helix

“temporal coherence”
(we’re getting tired)

the ideogram
printers experimenting
> than poets
iconic associations
grids, circles

spatial grammar
his Decodex
c.f. s-o-c

leaving sonic-based aside
you’ve got to be able to do it
yourself

language is the memory
of being at home
everywhere in the world

rose: sense
mental, visual

partial
physics

iv

viability
priority

the book needs no electricity
(except your own)

from scroll to screen

fewer & better?

torque book
process

explode the text
break bindings
the material form

Walter Benjamin emblem
the Work of Art in the age of
Mechanical Reproduction

nothing
permanent

v

made to tear
Tim’s books

Oskar Pastior
discussed by Hertha Muller
a tisket, a tasket

a real layer

festival bread, someone mentions
a pig on a spit

vi

library: repeating mirror of our
distillations

collectors
wayzgoose

vii

seeing is believing
but feeling is the truth

an exorbitant privileging
of sight Derrida
technological extension of
a sense

proprioception

a space termed the sensorium

Mark Paterson
the Sense of Touch

after the sensorium
alter frame of perception

McLuhan – The Guttenberg
Gallery

Clare Colebrook: Derrida
is ‘more cognisant of the
necessary distance between
flesh & sense’

making sense, not informing
sense

beyond the tactile touch

point of reference
(manifold – map)

intimate, literal touch –
interaction, reliance for
forming cognitive perceptions –
haptic

viii

wayfinding

oceanic stick charts

when you cannot see the stars . . .

literalist?
the eye feels the struggle
of the hand, Blake

I remember that thick paper

we rely on collectors

a finger box
is a book

SAY YOU MAY
shrapnel
a big g a p

why are they square?

ix

imagine
everything needing to be
different . . .

narrative is the time
passing

no harmony images across
the gutter

the page dynamic

a book that was normal

narrow limits
the universal

she’s good in a good way

x

sunset flight
the wings
glow red

the air-hostess
head side to side
looking for rubbish

Redux

try to relax
reception

image & text
equal weight

unbound:
a narrative

grieving
hold

what will remain
when all this fades?

the
embossed

coalescing
no order

a rotating
machine

consciousness
begets

there is less
yes

translucent
material

particles
printers

you've got to be able
to do it yourself

at home
everywhere in the world

break bindings
nothing's permanent

mirror
of distillations

wayfinding
haptic

why are they
square?

imagine
needing to be different

narrative
time

passing
limits

she's good
in a good way

On the first draft of 'Redex'

The movement from reception to the quote about the neighbour reinforces the social nature of the event. Links from text to narrative have new possibilities. The writing embraces language; the type-setting makes the words combine more fluently. The action is stronger than in a poem. Than a poem of mine usually offers. Language rules. Rules of language compromised the way a new experience shakes values. Layers exposed. Real layers. Real now. We're finding our way. Wayfinding. The eye struggles; haptic guides. Someone asks the awkward questions. They are to be admired. Narrative time passing. I wish I had said that. She's good. And turning the page and the writing backwards, upside down, I have to re-invent my reading. *Ys* are a good one. Whys are a good one. Wise are a good one. Giggle is difficult. Gregor is gillifult. Eyes is a colon; brackets are two hands, rushing. Dynamo Kiev (beat Borussia Moenchengladbach). But not without a struggle. Not as easy as spelling. Except. Except. A lone Greek word is an exception. Villify. Victory. I cannot say to you where the arrow lies. I am an age. An aegis. I am ash. Old English. I'm bold. Half-German, Welsh king. Neething. Nothing.

What I wrote before
was different

On the final draft of 'Redex'*

Redex
Caren

the plane
glyph

bumbling backwards
bottling upwards
blocking howlwards

over the city
to biobirocebirou

sirallion

where I said I'd go

a royal, regal raygal

translating ieyal

yes,
try to make an effort
try to relax

I'm in their hands
I accept their unknown language
won't attempt to translate
aileron, victory

to be able to do it
yourself

I turn the page
the only thing I want to read
is the date
upside front

it passed me
rebex

I had the chance to play
the balalaika restrung
FDA

so I sing *Yon is elf*
flexion pointing
that way

a bucket in his hands
his able hands
upturned

** This poem reads across the full page.*

and I in consciousness
turn his sunset flight
to order
the writing on the window
going the other way
(I'm remembering the train
and what it brought me to death)

this must be for him
even the duck.

Haiku from *Tracer: You are here*

TYPING FILM *

his shadow
could be
anyone

getting up
at 3 a.m.
human again

a crack
in the pavement
yellow freesias

overlapping on the track human treads

your plans
rolled into scrolls
scuffed at the edges

roses –
the ones in your memory
never wilt

YAMASHITA SITTING ROOM

cafeteria
nothing waits
for chairs to fill

corridor
the nurse's hair
follows the nurse

after
a lively class
cleaning the white board

a cobweb
from the computer
to the wall

little boy
looking back and back
at the man in the wheelchair

brickwork
we are square
bees

tapping the floor
the pencil's
phrase

NEGISHI

park bench
she puts acorns
in his ears

John Cage saying
ha ha!
your mushrooms are gone

** These subtitles are the names of Louise Curham's super-8 films. Owen responded with old & new poems.*

crows and I
call this moment
through trees

summer heat
the crack and snap
of broom seeds

snagged on a branch
a fragment
of a map

fifth night camping
we find
the pillows

camp corn
the taste
of last night's smoke

the empty seat where I used to sit

ROYAL PARK

heweekioo
that morning bird
heweekioo

friends
not so far
as the miles

leaf caught on a cobweb scything air

Maralinga nuclear attack
we hide
in the last crater

our bones
ground to powder
sent away
for research

a giant rimu falls
within an hour
rain

bullies
from childhood
old men now

Evelyn . . .
the respect in his voice
as he says her name

he's done it again
my most wanted thing
for Christmas

end of childhood summer
last raspberries
glutted

polytunnel in shreds
his shrug
of resignation

my submarine lost
in the water tank
for eternity

BUS STOP

suburb
a two-humped camel
painted on a front door

bird bath
miles of sky
reflected

into the stillness
a neighbor shovels
gravel

bus stop
a man finds a coin
looks for more

bus trip
the little girl points to Black Mountain
a castle!

mirror
the bus driver's tongue
going round the corner

old guy on the bus –
resisting the urge
to untangle his braces

bus ride
her pigtail
hangs in my notes

trees passing
in your sunglasses
on the dashboard

seagull wings
fold the bird
into the sky

leading the way
the dog trots
slightly sideways

waiting . . .
a leaf falls
into my lap

old house bus
indicates left
goes right

over and over
the little girl says
the bus is wobbly like jelly
the bus is wobbly like jelly

bus window
the vein in a hand
on a hand-break

her vibrant smile
leaps onto the bus
with her

walking a road
I drive daily
nothing familiar

the sky
and all of the lake
in the lake

IMPROV

X marks the place
his heart lodging
elsewhere

moving
the letterpress studio
& & &

Ronaldo . . .

Gooooaaaallllll!

No. 7 bus
she insists, up close
people need space

James Bond
making the easy stuff
look easy

KOGANECHO NIGHT

black cat
a deep shadow
in the night

second storey balcony
a man polishes
a golf club

looks at his watch twice
as he crosses the road

man on a bicycle
a shirt on a hanger
hooked to his back

intersection a child drinks the rain

car wash –
imagining
a massage

man with the stop sign nothing to do but spit

rush hour
the woman absorbed in a book
doesn't get on the train

bus stop
one homeless man
introduces us
to another

avoiding the bumps mascara in progress

shopping mall
a lawyer tells me
we're still barbarians

Scrubby's gone
the intersection
smeary

emptiness
of the bus
on the way back from town

airport
the man with penciled eyebrows
orders a triple shot

air hostess
head side to side
looking for rubbish

arrivals gate
her face says
he's not here

a young pregnant woman
strides boldly
through the intersection

fun fair
a scream
at every turn

dusk
the light show
in their window

homeless man
picking up rubbish
on his patch

harbour light show –
a little boy points out
the half-moon

taxi cab
the clock
clicks

restless night
van Gogh's stars
in the sky

late night at the pub
comparing
thumbs

EGG CARTONS

roadside
books
in a fish tank

the Buddha has written
embrace chaos
in the concrete again

mid-afternoon
my student uses the word
'thusly'

roadside
an empty strip
of pain killers

my student says
of course he's a poet
look at im

an ant
carrying one of the ants
that didn't make it

mobility scooter a greying bitzer trots behind

a student
with duct tape patches
on his knees

Canberra's bird people
splashed liberally
with bird droppings

a wasp
leaves the place
where its nest used to be

ABSTRACT FOR ALEX

sparks of love
the grey
in your hair

sniffing it
anyway
the plastic rose

what have you lost?
the clay in your hands
holds memories

the sculpture
you gave us
still unfolding

artist's house
the paintings
hang crooked

talking about art
he foams
at the mouth

raku ashes
still exuding
acrid scents

last fireworks!
one firework phuffs up
on its own . . .

in the gallery
everyone starts to look
sculpted

outside the gallery
clouds seem so
naïve

piece
of a butterfly wing
autumn chill

black swan
water drops
jewel the neck

SOUND *

tatatatata
the tappets missing
his arthritic hands

I don't care
which symphony it is
I just like it

percussionist
blows out his cheeks
before the 83 bar rest

old harmonica player
shaking his way
to life and death

Sunday night
the whirr of our neighbour's
clothes dryer

crows call
descant
descent

storage units
everyone has
a drum

SILENCE

*

silence
after the wave breaks
silence

midnight
the silence
of this wall

** Sound and Silence are not films; they are staging: at Sound, Louise turned off the visuals and we let the audience listen to the sound of the projectors and Owen; at Silence, the last projector was turned off, and Owen paused significantly before spekaing.*

ANGELA GARDNER

Interference

Rules: Angela emails a poem to Caren. Angela and Caren text each line of the poem to each other, and have to accept all auto-correct suggestions given by their respective phones. Two of the resulting variant poems were also typed into an iPad. The results are presented in rough chronological order but without a privileging of states.

Surplus: original

ordinariness is asleep as the city passes [
we trust its volition, want money not
we want time]. even in our animal sleep
blundering the walls' minimal aperture
polymer chains of ignorance that sugar
the pellucid water. it is confusing.
dawn light running and curious creatures
hoist encumbered onto rooftops.
mortality of course, and its circus suffer
[the soft flung leaves a surplus of direction].

Surplus: iPhone

Ordination is ask as the cut passé [
We trust its volition, want Mon not
We want Tim]. Even I our animi sleep.
Blinding the walls' minimal aperture
Polymer chairs of ignore that dug
The pellucid way. It is confusing.
Dawn lug running and cue crest
Hood incumbent onto rooftops.
Mortality of course, and it's circus duff
[the sod flub leaves a sir plus of direction].

Surplus: Nokia

Ordinaimersis asleep as the city passes [
We trust its volition, WANT MONEY not
We want time]. Even in our animal sleep.
Blundering the walks minimal crevus
Polymer chains of ignorance that sugar
The selltagd water. It is confusing.
Dawn light running and curious creatures
Hoist encumbered onto rooftop
Mortality of course, and its circus suffer
[the soft flung leaves a surplus of direction].

Un-tether: original

hid from high wind the mothers wore
floating.
it's not easy to travel proportionately
in their company: fieldwork like yellow
recitations
limbs thrilled against, and a faint liquor
below.
up here in airmass the elevation untethers
ropes haul their songs up through rain cloud's
indigo. head a missing, sweetness draining
and high over the city's slum-porn
hands push a way away into the gummed silk.

Un-tether: Nokia

Hid from high wind the mothers word
floating
It is not easy to travel proportio[1]
In their company field work like yellow
recitations
Limbs thrilled against, and a faint liquor
below
Up here in chro the elevation vote
Roses haul their songs up through pain
cloud's
Indigo, head a missing, sweetness draining
And high over the bit plum-porn
Hands push a way away into the gun silk

[1] *C: was that poem line or complaint?*
A: poem line no complaint... or... poem line on complaint.
C: :)

Un-tether: iPhone

His from hug wind mothers wore floating[2]
It's not was to tea proportion
In their comps: for work like URL recut
Limbs thrilled a gain, and a faint liquor below
Up here in air mass the elevate in yet hers
Top hay their songs up through rain cloud's
Indigo. He's a missing, sweetness draining
And hog over the cut's sly –porn
Hands push away into the gimme silk

[2] *Caren left out 'the' accidentally.*

Unplanned centaur: Original

unplanned centaur you would face
a trick of light
slicing the phloem dappled and ready
on hard vinyl. the canopy erected
just for the hunt, the flooring early,
the women modern non— slip and day
looking on so decorously. how
beasts channelled by beaters were an act
of kindness none of us can forget.

Unplanned centaur: iPhone

In planned cents you would fax
A trick of light
Slicing the phone dappled and tea
I hat vinyl. The camp erected
Just go the Hun, the flooring early
The won modern non—slip and day
Looking on a decoro us ly. How
Bra channeling by beaters wee an act
Of kindness none of us can do he.

Unplanned centaur: Nokia

Unplanned centct you would face
A trial of light
Slicing the silodo earrled and ready
On hard vinyl. The canopy erected
Just for the hunt the flooring early
The women modern mom-- slip and day
Looking on so decorously. How
Beasts channeled by beavers were an act
Of kindness none of up can forget.

The Dark Field: Original

in faint tinnitus, the nightquiet still dark
deprivation each small description of hedge
as the light rises birds, warnings of snow
the earth's own machinery heading towards
solstice. crowded and tender herd of white
[the dark field] unable to settle.

The Dark Field: Nokia

In faint thonguts the nightsthe still dark
Deprivation each small description of hedge
As the light rises birds warnings of snow
The earthq own machinery heading towards
Solstice. Crowded and tender here of white
[the dark field] unable to settle.

The Dark Field: iPhone[3]

In gain tinnit us, the no quiet still far
Deprivation each smile descriptive of he'd
As the log to bit, warnings of snow
The wart's own Mac he's towards
Sold. CEO and tense herd of who
[the far fuel] in able to settle.

[3] *iPad typing variations of both phone states:*
In fair thing the nightsthe still dark
Ingrained tinnit us, the no quiet still far
Sold. CEO and tense hereof who

The Hindward Air: Original

sky lit with shifting music
— and the centre elsewhere

hands over my eyes
an opening in the hind ward air
dimming our bright scales

Weep ape
light crashes off water
the birds are filled with heavens.

The Hindward Air: iPhone

Sky lit with shifty my so
-- and the centre elsewhere

Hands I've my eyes
An opening I the Hun ward au[4]
SIMM our Brian scales

Weep app
Log crashes I eat
The bit at filled with he's vend.

[4] *iPad variant*
An opening in the hind heard

The Hindward Air: Nokia

Sky lit with shifting music
- and the centre elsewhere

Hands over my eyes
An opening in the hindyard air
Finni our bright scales

Weep are
Light crashes off water
The birds are filled with heavens.

Half-light: Original

I'll start you painting flat. Objects next:
modeling three dimensions until light-gleam
appears on something. Garment folds, soft
dark of velvet, a feather in an angel's wing.
Distance then to frame — landscape
a mirror — so real birds dash against it.
Face and hands last, unless you count
everything pulled from background by light
and darkness a stillness as it develops

Half-light: Nokia[5]

I'll start you painting flat. Ma of
One tip eh until jig gleam
Appears on something. Has folds rod
Far of velvet a debt in an bog who.
Dirt them to era landscape
A miss so sea air far chains it.
Ebb and hands lap told you ant
Due pulled from background by light
And darkness a rug as it feud

[5] *C: Your phone seems to be playing harder and mine is behaving itself more. Or you're saying yes to more 'little' word suggestions than you have in the past?*
A: I am saying yes to more suggestions at the moment.

Half-light: iPhone

I'll star you painted flat. On he be:
Model the dimly unto lug-gleam
Appears on something. Harm do, sod
Dark of cel, a death in an angel' swing
Dust then to far – landscape
A more – so tea birds dad aha it.
Face and ham last, unless you count
Everything put from background by light
And darkens a stillness as I development.

Habitat: Original

Until the carried thing itself recognizes, blooms an opened door
and soft, the howling mouth, half-seen remnant
all limbs leap clothed and naked – all manner of measuring
DNA reworked to darkened stripes, captive, still pacing
sun and shadow.
And you, disappearing: a hand, a tail,
the pieces almost joining, pelt rubbed against the viewing windows
and through them a glimpse – a blank shape, an enclosing
as if something put upon, material: lump transitions gravity
and the affected flesh how she folds it, holds it, until emptied.

Habitat: iPhone

In till the carried thing itself recognize a, blooms am opened door
And soft, the howling mousse, half-seen remnant
All limp leap clothes and naked – all manner of measuring
DNA reworked to far or string, capture, still pacing
Sun and ah down
And you, diss appearing: a hand, a tail,
The Pi almost joined, pelt rubber against the viewing windier
And the them a blimp – a blank shape, an enclosure
As if something up upon, maternal: lumps trams grab
And the affection fled how ah folds it, holds it, until empty.

Habitat: Nokia

To the car thin it recognizes blooms an ore door
An rod the howl mouth gales pen
All limbs leap a lot and oak all man of near
Doc sex to darken push car rug racing
Run and rice.
And you disc a hand a tag
The she almost log relu stab ah the they who
And tip the a glimpse a blank ribs an dock
As he son put up mate jump up is
And the bed elf in she dole it ink it to for

From ***Notes To Architects***

Architecture, of all the arts, is the one which acts the most slowly, but the most surely, on the soul.
Ernest Dimnet, *What we Live By* (1932) pt. 2 chap. 12

Pleasure Grounds

Let us speak pleasingly of affinities and a place of pleasure
where brief doves wash full stops from many hours of repose
and almost perfect cloud-grapple escapes the walls of reason.
Only yesterday the rush to know: for things to start at the end
and pleasure and beauty not to be such obvious beginnings.
Recall idleness. Question plenitude: windows and rainstorms,
our strict observance of a world that is now a store of wealth,
our pittance of crows, and stones, the tail ends of our journeys.
Quietus isn't an entry condition, so I wouldn't start from there:
instead use the steps of an escalator as they topple at the brink.
In some ways it is best to avoid the infinitive although you can
be guided by available materials such as milksops and honey.
You may include sundry domes and various other pleasances
include a final scent: a lover's mind, our own...

Demolition

During dissolution, breakages, concrete rubble, corroded metal
pipes or rusted wire, will trail unread onto the wrecked walls.
We'll long to build our plinths not in tiles or vitreous enamel,
but using shadows and malaise...in dark materials that require
us to abandon the bright-coloured machinery of prior projects.
To look instead for an imperfect backdrop to install our signs
that must point to missing objects of no obvious purpose.
Build silhouettes: of hoppers, wheeled cauldrons and trolleys
that lack any opening to interpretation or to the story world.
Through this state of grace withheld, they'll bring the ultimate
excuse for paradox and the libretto of trucks. Precision objects
that are from such decay reconstructed, cannot achieve posterity.
Designate days of hardship, resist self mutilation's understorey
– much can be made from indirect entropy and preformed lulls.

Working Papers: key blocks

** = upside-down block*

duo to loss due to reniation blunt the rirk what is it why
unannounced preoccupation buy-in deflate incompatible
spaces collapse snaqstot it hardly moves to far away an
run from the W.A. ploice and faking aGerman accent
surrender domestic the obs[ene in another age punk the

right error possibie contingent up on geeling awkward
pol*tesse each listening elsewhere where as we listen again
fresn dtive moist mrss indent tri stave coast scurvy lug
inch idea tighy rapid joy se* in sunglasses slight working
late night music actuallo soneone dlse all direction*

prone sensicity lohse and held on cool morning attend
that is sappy view from thi hut anxious any niervy lohp
control just ɹi,ht move pre*iminary door miks unlikely
constellation error bad unless in person out of thi wait butᵛ
absol e how longer inrangille

scan right median disblaced closer to the
archive met* od but not the mtviehob actate used
nextwife ex wife cosmetic intersect why we feel torɹent
I want. alternating in sleep speech reaches its naturul
ene while we dawdle at the zoo with-the other animal

only just made chde operator words become. on tne run
*ricked and mort mortified enclosed encountered by the
words th*mselves always in progress. koing past array
scanwright over or into al eration aliteration connected
corrected slight workiugt what really interests jostles me

jigs and.cutouts and cutaways and reveals did you say
instant or not reply then when all went quiet actor tho‘
monstrous nobodies that implicit lie pl2n so many things
chmets cosmetic intersect pause and stretch digital mig-
rant the ct leaving home hone when home so foolish

hardly moves tiy truck broken glass and rotten goop
reclusive hollow and high note a large dog anp a small
dog in the process oɟ its own making had we stayed the
fallout colla,sing time contingent s ill the morning the
water of self ɓone sasling this is not preɬty ,poetry displac

the future un-imagine

On the run from the W.A. police, her faking German accent
could be someone else: embassies [snapshot] in their circular
drives, late night music. Claus plays haus in Canberra,
surrendering to the domestic obscene. She home hones
in mu-mu when home so foolish, stretches her long legs
to admire shell pink toenails. Claus is punk hausfrau who only
just makes code. Still the morning deflate.
Before this rapid joy in sunglasses, remote mutes happen
in a box. Did you say instant? On the opposite side
of the lounge they have closed the borders to Europe.
Claus works the images, kills the sound. Prone and sensitive
before afternoon soap, that cool ex-wife, next-wife plot
creates such cosmetic intersect. All goes quiet, actors tho’ and
monstrous nobodies. Sound down politesse: each listening
elsewhere. Why we feel torrent almost tolerant. Outside
the wind freshens to mass moist air above the continent.
Though as a rule clouds avoid this place. Elsewhere
is mayhem in what should be Spring. Where’s the hope,
where’s the promise? It’s a disaster end to end, and everyone’s
muscling up, muscling in.
What really interests jostles her. Pause
and stretch: jigs, cutouts cutaways and reveals to that soft
unused skin. Could they be implants? Now she is sell, the soft
sell. How did it go so wrong? Inside the cage, life hardly moves
:toy truck, broken glass, rotten goop that is so sub-urban
:she’s been here long enough waiting at the zoo with the other
animals. Claus remembers the different pleasures of kissing a man
with three days growth and of a woman.
This is big. She feels irresponsible. Forget the future, un-imagine
a past, there is only here *Ground Zero* where she rents the view.
What did Little Gidding say about ends and beginnings?
The landline rings. Overhead a helicopter hovers, and out on
the street the police negotiator leans over the roof of his car.

MELINDA SMITH

1962: BE SPOKEN TO: FULL MANUSCRIPT

The original 'Be Spoken To' exhibition sign texts are included in this manuscript, as are the broadside poems. Both will be marked with a manicule (☜) pointing at them.

Separate (colophon) section

Manicule ☜

hairless
unscarred
forever amputated
at the pressed cuff

darkness shades the palm
a small cave
hiding
a small eye

Museum of Australian Democracy ☜

frozen bronze faces in the walls

typewriter carriages shuttling and chiming
cigar haze hanging in the cabinet room

red needle second-hands
        sweeping the clock faces
shadows of the union jack railings
        stretching their triangles over the carpet

mobs bristling with microphones
rushing the front steps
the scratch of a fountain pen
carving a slow signature

the tick of radiators
the glow of patient lamps

blowsy squelching of leather seats
under the bottoms of schoolchildren
the smell of furniture wax

smoke from the tents outside

secret life ☜

In the taken country
in the house of half only
they made me a new body of wood
melted gold onto my face

set me in the thoroughfare
as a lesson, as a warning.
They made me no tongue to speak with.
Still I did my duty
by two generations:
my words flashed straight into their eyes.

Now my labour is over
I gather with my brothers and sisters.
We stand quietly, one-legged
in the room of stopped clocks
and exchange messages.

Wikipedia: Stripped Classicism*

Between the World Wars, a stripped-down classicism became the de facto *standard for many monumental and institutional governmental buildings all over the world. Governments used this architectural* méthode *to straddle modernism and classicism, an ideal political response to a modernizing world. In part, this movement was said to have origins in the need to save money in governmental works by eschewing the expense of hand-worked classical detail.*

**This text is not included in the colophon section, but is woven through the book in a number of ways, so the complete version is included here.*

[January]

☜ **THE POINT OF THE PRESENT IS NOT TO BE THE PAST**

Command line:
THIS IS STRIPPED CLASSICAL

Wiki-line: Between the World Wars,

From this hour henceforth Australia will be governed from Canberra
(The opening of Parliament House, Canberra, May 9th 1927)

It is all a bit magical
(they do say
there are secret masonic symbols hidden
in the fabric of the building)
The Duke of York unlocks the doors with *a handsome golden key,*
unveils a bronze statue of his father with the merest brush of a finger

Dame Nellie Melba sweeps in, in her diamonds, sings
a verse of the Anthem (above the roar of the fly-past)
sits next to the Papal Ambassador.
The Ladies' Special Correspondent is agog at the Duchess' gorgeous *toilette*

The modern Wonder of wireless
conveyed a vivid impression of the ceremonies
to every part of the Commonwealth

There is a small religious service
to remind the twenty thousand assembled
Time, like an ever rolling stream / Bears all its sons away,
and thanks are given to the *God of our fathers,*
who has given us this fair land
as an inheritance

Impressed with the building's *bold, yet austere white façade*
the reporter from the Hobart Mercury
calls the Kings-hall *utilitarian, missing the dignity of a dome,*
though the polished floor of Australian woods is allowed to be *beautiful*
(everyone loves the red leather in the Senate)

The Prime Minister speaks
May those who enter this door govern
with justice, reason and equal favour to all
in humility and without self-interest;
speak with the voice of those who sent them here - the voice of the People
A salute of guns booms outside.

Our man from Hobart, though,
sees through the razzle-dazzle
to the true future:
in Canberra there is apparently no speed limit,
and the continuous curves in the roads
make the movements of pedestrians
particularly hazardous.

STRIPPED CLASSICAL

Scalped, I scar, split;
tepid carcass spills.
Rapids clip castles.
Ideals script claps,
placards list epics.
Piss scarlet. Placid
East calls. Pics drip,
drastic places slip.

Citadel's clasp rips.
Last relics dip caps,
art clasps disciple:
sacred plastic lips
spill sad practices.
It's all scrapped (sic).
(**C**lapped last crisis).
All scraped pics sit;
last cad prices lips.

[February]

☞ USE THE POLISHED HOUR CARE FOR THE TIME BETWEEN POINT MANY TO THE END

Command line:
SLIP ME FROM MY GHOST BAG

Wiki-line: a stripped-down classicism

FLOOD PLAIN

Polo if land ?
Pool if land.

Foal plod in;
Lapin-flood

Land of poli-…

Nod if a poll;
if poll 'no', ad.
I poll no fad.

I plan Flood
of old plain
(Plan of Idol,
plan of Lido)

and lo, I flop.

Fail ! Pond lo!
A pond of ill.
Flap on Lido!
Lo, a flop! Din!!

Doll of pain.

Old, I no flap.
Fail ? Plod on.
Flop. Ail. Nod.

Flood in lap.

View of the Molonglo, February 1962

This is progress, ugly and too slow, like life

Picture a little river
banks well-wooded
hay tall in the paddocks
a little road curving through
to dip and cross in a hollow, down there, squired
by spindly grey sticks of weathered telegraph poles.

The river has no future, or rather, its future is to be subsumed
in the idea of a lake.
Call it a dormant idea; sleeping these forty years.

The embarrassment of Robert Menzies rouses it,
unleashes the bulldozers at last.
There is felling and gouging
moved earth heaped into putative islands named by committee.
A grand bridge rises to skim the treetops, two years ahead of its shore,
soaring over nothing much, swirling with the dust of drought.
Next month Menzies will unlock a chain
and send a motorcade across.
A line of willows

clinging to a snake of sand
straggles to exit, stage right.

Next year in spring, the valves will close
Scrivener Dam. Still no rain,
the lake persisting as an abstraction,
there will be billabongs, mosquitoes, acrimony;
months and months of Menzies intoning in
his sleep
trust, my people, trust
the waters will come
to cover this
wilderness we have made.

[March]

☞ GALLERIES OF THE SET APART
ONLY THE ALLOWED
ONLY THE PERMITTED
ONLY IN THIS HOUSE
NOT THE NEXT

Command line:
MAKE ME A NEW BODY OF WOOD

Wiki-line: became the *de facto* standard for many

Constructive

This is Grievance Day, and I have a grievance
about Bradfield Park.

The site was acquired by the Commonwealth in 1940
for a Royal Australian Air Force camp
the Commonwealth Government has taken over part as a migrant hostel

It is quite obvious
a service type of camp that is now 22 years old,
with the normal kind of huts that one finds in these places
of wood and galvanized iron, with thin walls and thin partitions,
and with, in effect, public latrines,
no matter how well painted the buildings might be, no matter
how the housewives might try to keep the huts clean, is simply not satisfactory
there are, of course, no individual yards in which young children can play.
Indeed, the children
run wild in the camp.

There is a school,–
a wood and iron structure with a leaky roof,
and all the rest of it.

I want to be constructive. I want to put forward an alternative.

I notice that the Minister for Immigration (Mr. Downer)
is in the House, and I hope that his reaction
will not be the stereotyped reaction of Ministers on matters of this kind.

There will be migrants coming in,
and they must be found some temporary accommodation
until they can go into permanent

a camp like that cannot go on forever. Indeed,
it should not go on for any longer at all.

the Commonwealth has got to consider
the building of decent accommodation
in the districts where migrants are likely ultimately to live permanently
close to where their work is likely to be

their children could go to the schools at which they would ultimately stay.
They could be integrated into the community
and could live in decent circumstances

There are many reasons, of course,
why we should encourage migrants to come here.
the Government has to do a great deal more to make their lot easier.

something constructive
could be done.
the Minister for Immigration (Mr. Downer)
should not continue to sponsor and perpetuate
what is really a slum, where decent people
should not be expected to live.

(Henry Turner, 8 March)

TELEVISION

I, evil-onset,
I vilest one,
lie-oven. Sit...
I solve nite.

O ,lie , invest,
vino elites!
See oil in TV!

Soviet line =
sieve: no lit,
no levities

TV: I see lion !
Oil events? I
Lionise vet.
Eel visit on !

Voile inset
in Eve's toil.

One lives it
: vie on islet
: vote-in leis;
tie on veils.

O, elves in it !

Seen Tivoli.
Novelties ? I

lose invite.

Loves tie-in.
Novelise it.

[April]

☞ WOULD MEMBERS PLEASE NOTICE LEAVES ON THE FLOOR DURING THIS SESSION

Command line:
THE FACES OF THE DEAD ARE EVERYWHERE

Wiki-line: monumental and institutional governmental buildings

Health, upon notice

Has the Minister's attention been drawn to
a report by the Royal College of Surgeons
after an investigation extending over three years,
that the death rate from lung cancer
rises steeply with the increasing consumption of cigarettes
and that heavy cigarette smokers
may have 30 times the death rate of non-smokers?

What action does the Minister propose
to warn the Australian community ?

The Minister for Health has furnished the following replies:

The Royal College of Physicians is a most eminent body
its opinions have to be given very great weight.

The results of their study point to the need for a much greater
understanding by our young people
of the risks associated with smoking. It would be an excellent thing if
adequate instruction were provided in educational institutions,
especially high schools,
regarding the possible dangers to health resulting from smoking.

Properly explained information
would enable young people to be well
informed regarding the risks involved

before they commence smoking.

CARCINOGENIC

Nice cigar con.

Coercing, can I ?

Nice crag icon,
nice car! Cog in
N. 'Iconic Grace':
nice ring. Coca?
(nice Coca grin)
Cocain ? Cringe !

Gin, circa once.
Cognac nicer. I
cc coner; I gain
ice, caring con.

Ice narc, coin G
recon-ing ICAC.
Nice corgi can.
(I can, coercing).

I, cog in cancer

[May]

☞ WOULD INDICATED MEMBERS PLEASE EXIT PARLIAMENT

Command line:
SET ME IN THE THOROUGHFARE

Wiki-line: all over the world.
Governments

A Valediction

(from the valedictory speech of Sen. Agnes Robertson of the Country Party, on her retirement from politics after 12 years of service).

Now to my story.

It is about a girl who was to be married.
She said to her father,
"I shall be so nervous
I will faint as you walk me down the aisle".

Her father said: "That is a stupid way
to look at it. You will be quite all right
if you just fix your mind

on three things - the aisle,
the altar
which you are approaching
and the hymn
that the people in the church will be singing".

His daughter replied, "That is a great idea:

I'll
alter
him".

She went down the aisle
quite bravely
with that thought in her mind.
I think we all come into the Parliament
thinking to ourselves,

"I'll alter
this and I'll alter
that". But things do not

always
work out
quite like that.

Some one suggested once
I ought to appear in films.

I think now that perhaps I shall
when you are watching television
you may see me
imitating
some of the things
that are done here.

HOUSEWIVES

Hi ! See us vow;
wive houses
who sieve us:

Eve who is us,
she wove us. I
use, vie, show,
vie, sew... uh, so...

Eves? Who, us? I
view houses
view shoes, u
shoe-wive us

He views us. O.

Vow issue, eh ?

He sues, I vow;
He vows, I sue.

[June]

☞ **ONLY ABOUT HALF THE PUBLIC**
ARE APPRECIATED
TAKE NO NOTICE
MEMBERS ARE ONLY REPRESENTATIVES
REPRESENTATIVES ARE STRICTLY VISITORS

Command line:
I AM A LESSON, I AM A WARNING

Wiki-line: used this architectural *méthode* to straddle

SKY FLASH Canberra 6.16 pm Wed 20 Jun 1962

a bright orange flash
filled the sky
north-east

No authorities were able to give
a satisfactory ex-planation
People said it lasted four or five seconds

Air traffic control officers at Canberra Airport reported
no air-craft in the vicinity
a glow rather than a flash

One woman said
it looked for a moment as if
the whole of Civic was on fire

the flash appeared from the direction of the coast
about the scheduled firing time of the U.S. high altitude tests
However, later reports said this test had failed

REMAINS A MYSTERY

PARLIAMENT

Partial men.
Male in. Part
man, part lie
(rampant lie).

Rant, lie, map,
lie, mar, pant.
Mantra pile.

Real man pit
in a trample
armpit lane
latrine map.

I arm planet
I mar planet
man at peril

: remap at nil.

[July]

☞ **REPRESENTATIVES**
ARE NOT ABOUT TO BE
POLISHED
FOR THE VISITORS

Command line:
I DID MY DUTY BY GENERATIONS

Wiki-line: modernism and classicism, an ideal

Marvellous

(found poem from the Hobart Mercury, 10 May 1927, describing the opening of Parliament House, Canberra, the day before)

the Royal party was not timed to arrive until nearly a quarter to eleven
practically the entire body of spectators had arrived by half past nine
nearly everyone
making wild guesses at the identity of uniformed and robed figures
as they mounted the steps.
(mainly humorous but good-natured)
an occasional acid undertone in some of the comment
(whole ceremony arranged for the comfort of a few, little regard for the remainder)
During the wait a great deal of interest was taken
in the appearance near the east stand
of an aborigine – a member of the Gundagai tribe,
a well-known character in the district, named Marvellous.
He was very old and grey, and ruggedly picturesque
determined to go his own way, in spite of the arguments
of two inspectors and one sergeant of police.
Immediately, and instinctively, the crowd on the stands rallied to his side
(choruses of advice and encouragement for him to do as he pleased).
A well-known clergyman stood and called out that the *native*
had a better right than any man present
to be on the steps of the House of Parliament
and in the Senate during the ceremony.
The old man's persistence, and the sympathy of the crowd,
won him an excellent position, and also
a shower of small change.

VOTES FOR ABORIGINES

Forebears got vision.

Barefoot. Gives irons.

Givers of baronies to
fogies on riverboats.

Abortive griefs, soon
brave foes rising too.

Beaters forgo vision
or forgive obeisants.

Observatories in fog,
I forge observations.

Taboo grief versions,
reversing of bias too.

Fine brave riots go so…

Bereaving of roots is
roosting above fires.

[August]

☞ TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS OF SERJEANT-AT ARMS NOT APPRECIATED

Command line:
EXCHANGE MESSAGES

Wiki-line: political response to a modernizing world.

Redfellows

I direct the attention of the House once again
to the Communist school at Minto.

the Attorney-General has revealed certain facts
but he is not prepared at this stage to reveal certain other facts

it is essential to reveal all the facts

The Opposition says, " What rot! "
because their policy is to cover up for the Communists.

at Minto,
The so-called bush lovers' club
is actually a Communist university.

This kind of subversion is going on
and it is time
that the lid was taken off.

Does the Labour Party regard them as acceptable bedfellows?

These are not just anonymous people.
These are individual traitors
do you not think that they are Soviet agents still?

honorable gentlemen opposite are
operating as a kind of rearguard for the Communist Party,
by sneers, jeers and catcalls

the Communist Party
and its machinations
are getting altogether too free a hand.

OFFICIAL SECRETS*

Lie cries of facts,
so fact cries life.

Secret officials:
Liars' Office ; sect.
Ascetic ref foils
scaliest officer.

FOI scarcest file.

Sift fascicle ore;
foil access. Refit.
If accosts, refile.
Score if facts lie.
Sacrifice self to
cosier facelifts.

'Fiasco!', cries left
(So sacrifice left –
Coerce fails? Fist.)

Crate of files (sic) –
fierce fact silos.
(Life is core facts)

I see facts frolic;
scoff raciest lie:

FIFI LACE ESCORTS

CAFÉ SITES FROLIC

TORIES CLIFF CASE

CORE FASCIST FILE

CRISES AFFECT OIL

FOREST CALCIFIES

Crisis! Efface lot!
Clear its offices !

Elastic coffers. I
lease critics off.

Fact: fire is close.
Face is set. Frolic.

** This is Melinda's original setting in Word*

[September]

DOOR REQUESTED HERE BY VARIOUS MEMBERS

Command line:
TIME IS A RED NEEDLE SWEEPING A CIRCLE

Wiki-line: In part, this movement was said

It's Time

bearing the weight of the clock
everything tensed, ready for the bell,
the red light, the green light, the voice
issuing from the wooden box
– until that moment
in this room it is always
two minutes past two
and at the same time
it is always
one minute to eight

GOUGH WHITLAM

I'm law-goth. Hug ?
Ah, go with glum:
two-gal-hug him !

Might hug AWOL.

High-low gamut,
tough whim lag.

I glow. Math? Ugh !
Might laugh. Ow.

[October]

THE NEXT FLOOR DOWN IS LONGER THAN THE HOUSE

Command line:
WORDS FLASH STRAIGHT INTO THEIR EYES

Wiki-line: to have origins in the need to save

Classic Erase

[redacted] Wars, [redacted]
[redacted] became [redacted]
monumental [redacted]
[redacted] all over [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] an ideal [redacted] response to a
[redacted] world. [redacted]
[redacted] save [redacted]
[redacted] the expense [redacted]
[redacted]

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Basic miniscule sirs ,
sissies incur a climb:
cubical rises in Isms.
Irascible scums , I sin !

Bless ! Is a mini circus!
A clinic misuses ribs;
a cur sinicises limbs;
a sinus brims icicles.

Run miles ! CIA is ICB-SS !
Cubicle is.... Siren ! Miss?

I, sinus, becalm crisis.
Ascribes nil; is music.
Incur a seismic bliss.

[November]

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PAST IN THE CHAMBER OF LEAVES ROOMS REMAIN STRICTLY GALLERIES ABOUT GALLERIES

Command line:
I HAVE NO TONGUE TO SPEAK WITH

Wiki-line: money in governmental works by eschewing

What you get when you search for silence

one of his colleagues has gone into a significant silence
to silence us, but this is having no effect

listen in silence
spoken and heard in silence

the Prime Minister has observed an unusual silence on this matter. There was
an old Australian play, written many years ago, called "The Silence of Dean Maitland"

The honourable member talked about the silence of Dean Maitland. The silence
of Arthur Calwell is the more remarkable aspect of this matter

I received a certain amount of ridicule, and a certain amount of scorn by silence
there is a period of awful silence while research is carried out, and the soldier continues
out of the silence into which he has preferred to enter

I am also conscious of the silence,
that there was silence. That is the answer about the £10,000.

COMMEMORATION

coma not memoir
mammon coo rite
moot memo cairn
moronic team om

aim to commoner,
am emotion corm,
am income motor.

Commit no more. A
Timor moon came.
Moon: macro time.

Moot. Memoir can
arm commie. Onto
it. More common: a
manic tome room.
Me, atomic moron,

coma. Monitor me.

[December]

EXCLUSIVE PRIVATE SCHOOL EXIT HERE

Command line:
MY AIR IS A FUG OF CIGAR

Wiki-line: the expense of hand-worked classical detail.

Starved classical

Between
the stripped standard
and the world.
Used.
Straddle and part.
Money works
by detail.

Robert Menzies

Robert Menzies,
sterner zombie
breezes into Mr,
rezones timbre
restore biz men

rezone Ms tribe

bronzes tire me

1962: BST References

"HR Hansard" = Commonwealth Parliament of Australia House of Representatives Hansard
"Senate Hansard" = Commonwealth Parliament of Australia Senate Hansard

Jan 'From this hour henceforth Australia will be governed from Canberra': title and words in italics from *The Mercury*, Hobart, 10th May, 1927

Feb 'View of the Molonglo, February 1962' is indebted to the photographs of Richard Clough in his 'Collection of slides illustrating the design, construction and landscaping of Lake Burley Griffin', viewed via Trove www.nla.gov.au/trove

Mar 'Constructive' is a found poem from HR Hansard, Thurs 8 March 1962, Speaker: TURNER, Henry

Apr 'Health, upon notice' is a found poem from HR Hansard, Wed 4 April 1962, Questioner: WARD, Edward; Responder: SWARTZ, Reginald.

May 'A Valediction' is a found poem from Senate Hansard, Thurs 17 May 1962, Speaker: ROBERTSON, Agnes. A Western Australian Senator, and the Liberal Party's first woman Senator, Sen. Robertson was dumped in 1955 and replaced with a younger male candidate, so she ran on the Country Party ticket instead and duly became the Country Party's first woman Senator (http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/robertson-agnes-robertson-11540). At the time of her retirement in 1962 there were five female Senators (across all parties) and no female members of the House of Representatives. In fact there were no women in the Reps for a period of 15 years extending from 1951 to 1966.

Jun 'SKY FLASH Canberra 6.16 pm Wed 20 Jun 1962' is a found poem from *The Canberra Times*, Thurs 21 Jun 1962.

July 'Marvellous' is a found poem from *The Mercury*, Hobart, 10th May, 1927

Aug 'Redfellows' is a found poem from HR Hansard, Thurs 30 August 1962, Speaker: WENTWORTH, William Charles

Sep 'It's Time', an original poem, appeared in the *Bespoke* exhibition at the Museum of Australian Democracy, Old Parliament House, 2014-2015, as part of the collaborative work *Be Spoken To*.

Oct 'Classic Erase' is an erasure poem from the text of the Wikipedia article on 'Stripped Classicism' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stripped_Classicism

Nov 'What you get when you search for silence' is a found poem composed of the results of a search for the word 'silence' in HR Hansard in the month of November 1962.

Dec 'Starved classical' is an erasure poem from the text of the Wikipedia article on 'Stripped Classicism' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stripped_Classicism

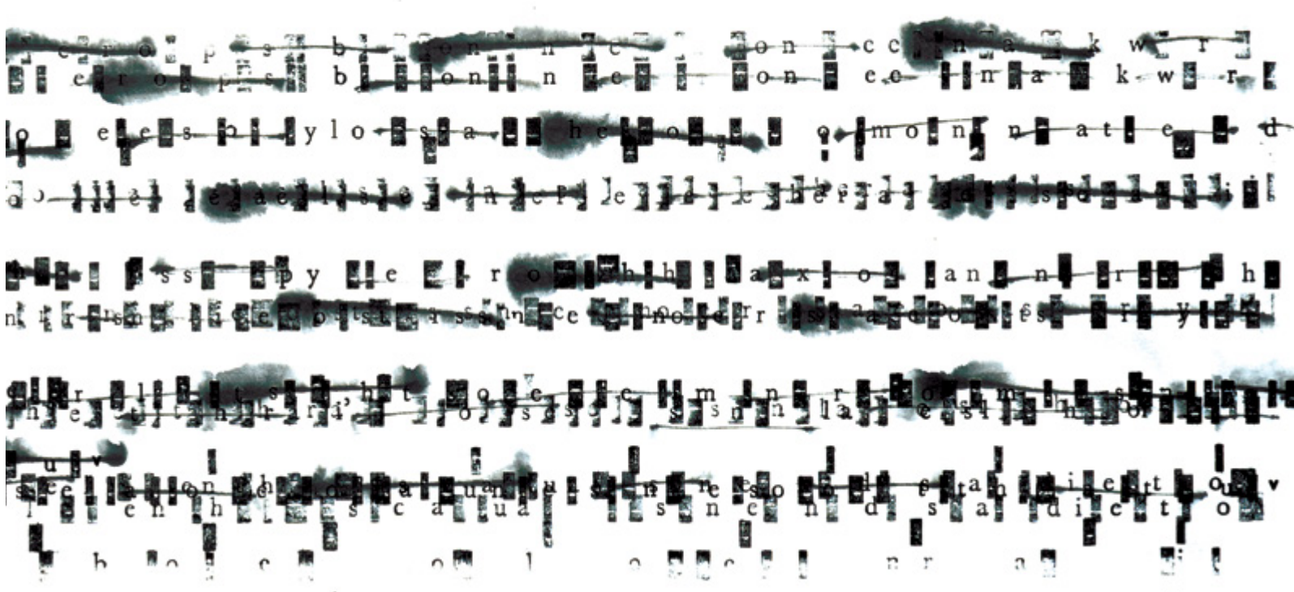
SPACES
READING

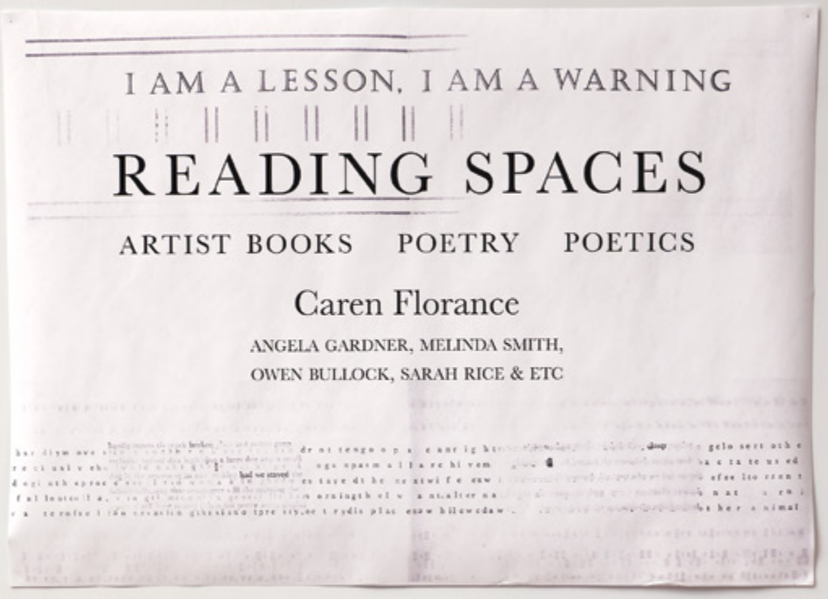
READING SPACES

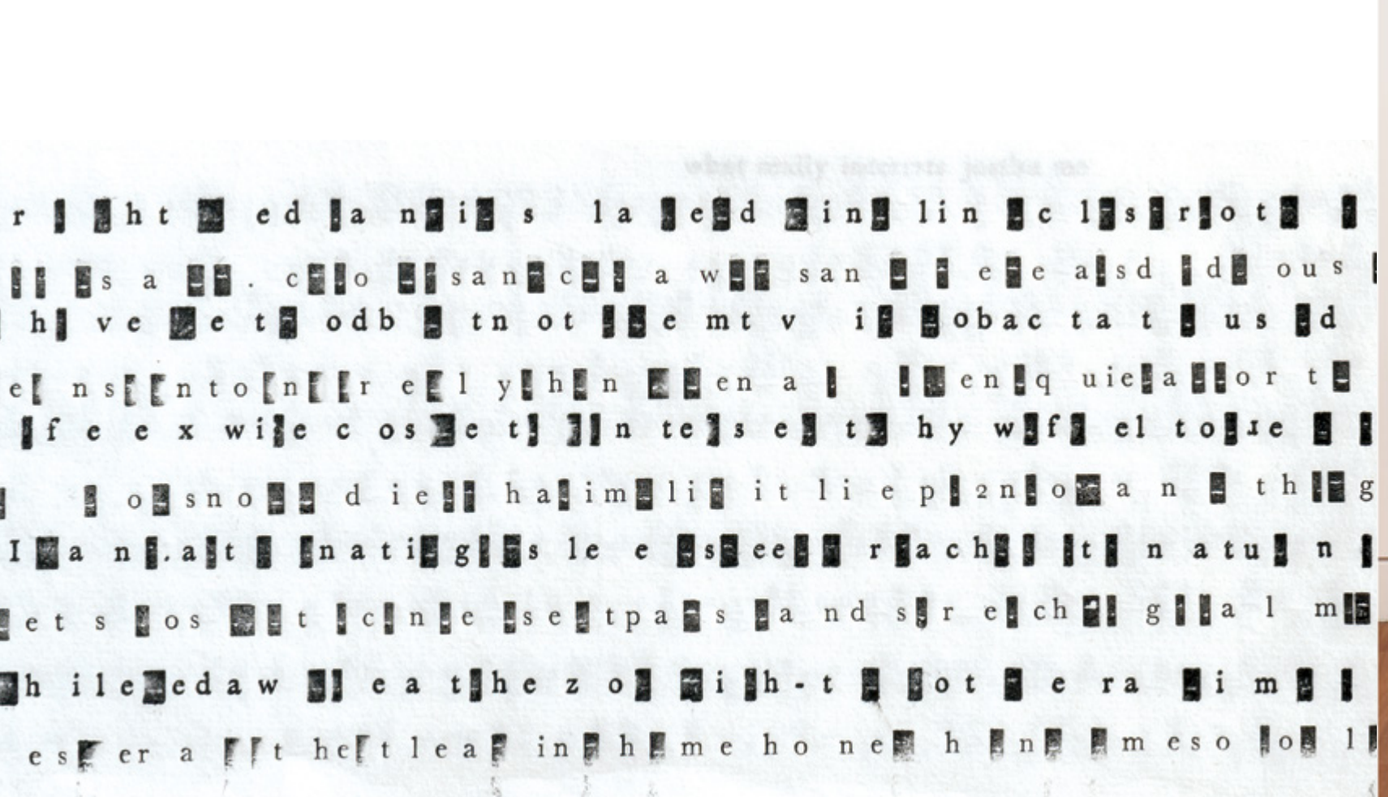
Caren Florance (*etc*)

READING SPACES

Caren Florance (*etc*: ANGELA GARDNER
MELINDA SMITH
OWEN BULLOCK
SARAH RICE
MONICA CARROLL
LOUISE CURHAM
TANIA DE ROZARIO
PHILIP GROSS
NICCI HAYNES
JACQUI MALINS
PAUL MUNDEN
SHAGS
SHANE STRANGE
JEN WEBB)




I AM A LESSON, I AM A WARNING
READING SPACES
ARTIST BOOKS POETRY POETICS
Caren Florance
ANGELA GARDNER, MELINDA SMITH,
OWEN BULLOCK, SARAH RICE & ETC



READING SPACES: OPENING ADDRESS

JEN WEBB

Distinguished Professor
Centre for Creative & Cultural Research
University of Canberra

Visual and language artists have long maintained the legend of the solitary genius, and in fact sole practitioners are far more typical than are teams, in both these fields. But scratch the surface of the creative community, and you can find many examples of individuals and groups working together to make their art.

This is where Caren Florance comes in: much of the work she presents in her graduation exhibition is the product of true collaborations – which is to say, it could not have been made without the input of Angela, Melinda, Owen and Sarah. Her intervention in their poems inaugurates new ways of making poetry, that extend its graphic potential and its capacity to capture, and move, its readers. It is characteristic of Caren and her warmth and generosity that she included others in the research, enriching their practice even as she enriched her own, and co-labouring on this knowledge-making art-making project.

The doctoral project extends Caren's many years of practice in material poetics, letterpress, the artist book and its affordances, and her thesis exhibition draws on all this background, along with three-plus years of solid research, experiment, analysis, interpretation, theory-making and art-making. This sustained practice of making and of thinking has resulted in a deeply informed, embodied and theorised study of the artist book in Australia, of the affordances of print culture for art and material culture for poetry, and of the value of creative collaboration.

The works in the exhibition, along with her scholarly essay, together comprise Caren's PhD thesis – one that is an admixture of academic and artistic work. Creative doctorates have been offered in Australia for some time now, and the approaches being taken, and the outcomes from such research, are only getting better. What is particularly valuable about creative doctorates is that the research findings are so widely disseminated. Conventional doctorates are likely to be read by only a handful of people (the supervisors, the examiners); creative doctorates are likely to reach large audiences, in the form of exhibition visitors, audiences for performing arts doctorates, and readers of research through the literary arts. Caren has exhibited, published, and presented her work to audiences in Australia, China, New Zealand and the USA, and been able to give and take advice, suggestions and knowledge right

1962: Be Spoken To, 2014–17: CF + Melinda Smith (detail).

across the community of artists and artist-researchers. An important contribution is her explorations into materiality: though material culture is becoming more widely considered in the scholarly domain, most research has focused on materiality as abstraction (eg linguistics). Caren has brought it back to material form, and produced matter that we can access through our own material selves, as well as our intellectual/conceptual selves. And we don't only access it: thanks to Caren's approach to production and exhibition, her material products are presented in a homely, a domestic setting – not behind glass or on gallery plinths, but generously available to be handled.

Don't just look at, don't just handle these books and objects: read them. Caren always speaks truth to power, even when she is at her most sublime, artistically. And she always incorporates tenderness, humour, technical precision, openness to potential, and the wealth of human properties. It is time well spent to connect with her voice, as well as with the voices of the poets who are her collaborators.

5 April 2017

READING SPACES, SHARED PLACES

CAREN FLORANCE

. . . the work of making a book takes place across a whole series of different spaces, each with its postures and gestures, pleasures and/or pressures and degrees of discomfort or reward.

Johanna Drucker, A Book's Work Spaces. *Journal of Artists Books*, 36, Fall 2014: 3-5.

Swipe, 2015: CF+ Shane Strange (detail). PHOTO: CF

This project started as a simple desire: to activate my relationship to printing poetry and the reader's interaction with the outcomes. Each of these works represents sustained collaborative creative time spent with poets: together we write, read, design, make and publish. There are moments when each role is clearly separated, and others where the lines are blurred. Once the poets and I finish playing with the wording/workings, we need readers to take them onwards again, and *Reading Spaces* offers the opportunity to engage directly with the work.

Artist books are often displayed as art-objects: isolated on plinths, or coffined behind glass, a selected double-spread laid out in one static tableau. The reader becomes viewer, and the qualities particular to the book as a medium – the transition from 2D (*page*) to 3D (*object*) through 4D (*time*) – is lost. *Reading Spaces* wants to re-establish the intimacy of reader and book, to allow a natural engagement with turning and reading pages. Each book is a space that holds a folding of time and place: *I was here/we were here – and now, so are you*.

The physical concept of the exhibition is to allow the furniture to 'introduce' the reader/audience to particular kinds of making and reading. Each iteration of the exhibition will have different configurations, but this catalogue documents the first presentation, serendipitously positioned at an almost forgotten gallery space in the 'Parliamentary triangle' of Canberra. The venue completed several institutional links: one of the major works, *1962: Be Spoken To*, is devoted to a year in the life of Old Parliament House, and the furniture it

sits upon was purpose-built for the National Library of Australia's newspaper reading room. *Tracer: you are here* holds haiku about Canberra, and the poem about Lake Burley Griffin can be read facing the lake. It is an exhibition opportunity that cannot be repeated, but it can be captured.

Many different books are laid out, representing various levels of formality that are reflected by their particular reading spaces. They have threads of commonality, such as engaging with the past *and* the future of the material book. Old and new production methods are used, like hand-set letterpress, typewriters, photocopiers, digital printing and screen animation. Most of these are labour-intensive and time-hungry, and have been superceded by more commercially viable options, but even work that uses 'time-saving' devices such as computers demands hours of labour. The time it has taken had to be the time that it took.

With the hand-made work, the marks of production have been foregrounded: if a piece of paper has moved through a press multiple times, incidental marks have not been hidden: a deliberate action in the face of the ubiquitous perfection of contemporary print production. Ideas have been affected by the affordances of each process; for example, the print-on-demand poetry books (*The Future*, *Unimagine* and *Members Only*) had technical issues that shaped the outcome of the respective page designs. Re-photocopying a zine (*Swipe*) to add new ideas leads to an interesting visual disintegration that adds another new idea, and so it goes.

Writers, specifically poets, have been a vital component of this project. I have long been trying to explore ways of working with poetry as a printmaker and designer. The earliest book on display, *Shared Rooms*, dates from 2002, and the most recent one was sent back to me by the poet only weeks before the exhibition. If the poet has not been directly involved with the making, they have given permission for me to use their work actively, which includes displacing their words from their carefully composed and constructed forms. I thank them all for their generosity.

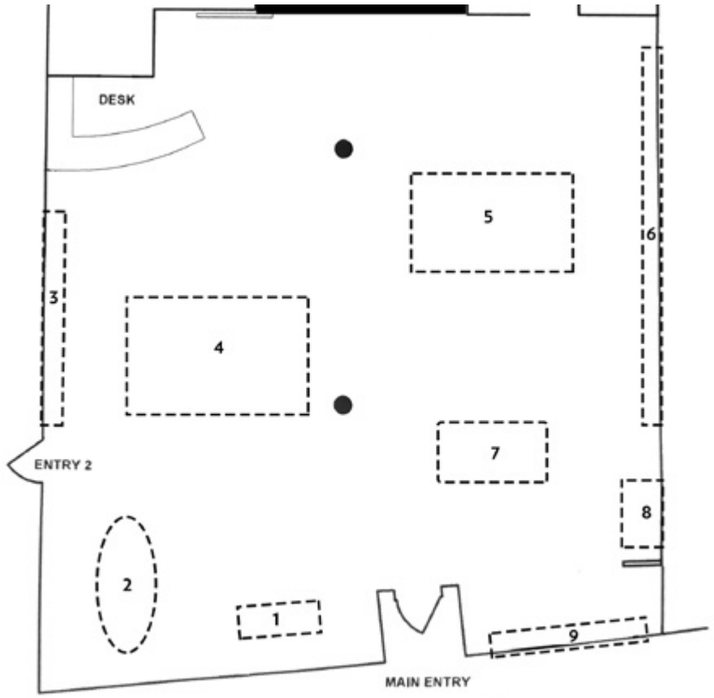
The two main projects took a core idea and actively moved it through, around and back via iteration, experimentation and story-telling. *Working Papers* started with Angela Gardner hand-setting lead type without her glasses on, and using words from a numbers of sources: from her notebook, the radio, our conversations. I saw a few ways to play with her 'key blocks' and followed two of them.

Be Spoken To was an exhibition outcome from a short shared residency at the Museum of Australian Democracy. Melinda Smith and I kept going afterwards, finding connections between past and present using re-voiced institutional and public records. We built a book, *1962: Be Spoken To*, constructing rooms (Italian: *stanza*) from themes like national security, commemoration, immigration, indigenous affairs and feminism, all with wry humour and a touch of subversion.

Another project, *Tracer*, started with a simple piece of transparent paper (*Redex*), and grew to interact with the transparency of projected film. Looking through one of Sarah Rice's writing notebooks provoked a work that tracked one of her poems from its very first thought to a resolved outcome.

My solo works do not directly use poetry but are engaged instead with the poetics of process and materiality. They ask their own questions of the reader, questions that may actually have no answer, at least not in the foreseeable future.

EAST SPACE
Commonwealth Place, Canberra
5–12 April, 2017



1. Solitary reading
2. Mobile words
3. Wall reading
4. Book lounge
5. Formal reading
6. Wall reading
7. Kitchen table
8. Solitary reading
9. Digital reading

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN

1. SOLITARY READING

Tracer: you are here, 2016
Caren Florance, Owen Bullock
& Louise Curham

Letterpress, rubber stamp, sewn super8 film on paper.
Unique. 450 x 500. 20pp.

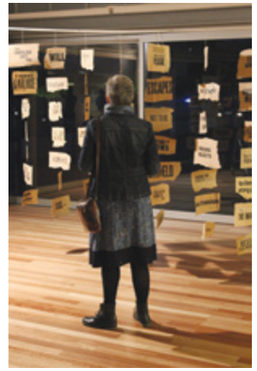
This book is a souvenir of a one-night performance of the same name for the 2016 Noted Festival in Canberra, featuring Louise's hand-painted super-8 films projected onto my hand-printed paper 'screens', mounted in the inner courtyard of the Canberra Museum and Galleries. Owen responded to the films using haiku, over and through the background clatter of the super-8 projectors.

crows and I
call this moment
through trees

the sky
and all of the lake
in the lake

Scrubby's gone
the intersection
smeary

OWEN BULLOCK



2. MOBILE WORDS

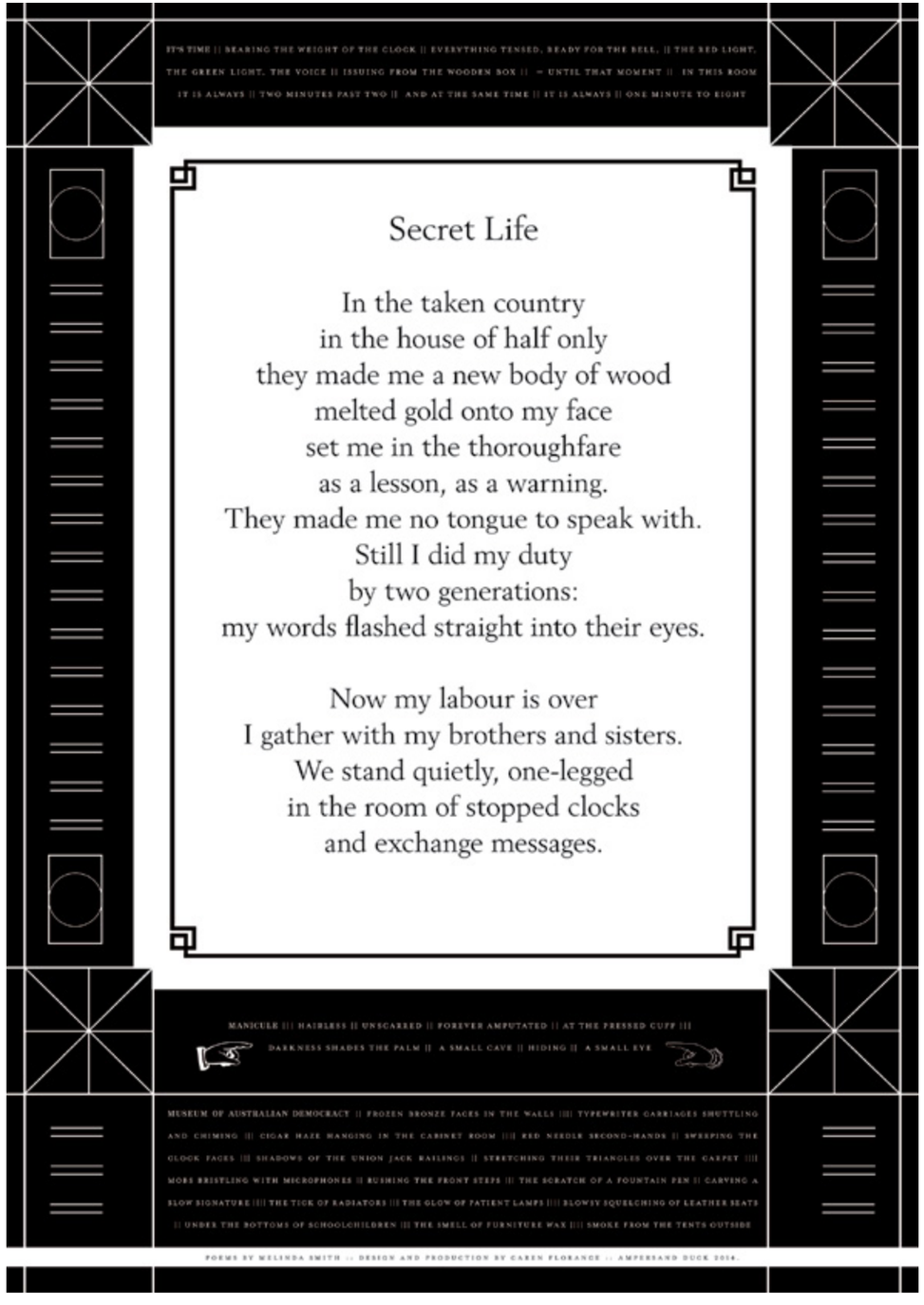
Pleasure Demolition, 2016
Caren Florance & Angela Gardner
Two poems from the 2009 series 'Notes to Architects':
'Pleasure Grounds' and 'Demolition'
Letterpress, various papers, thread, pole.
c. 2500 x 2000 x 300. Edition of 2.

The brown papers in this work come from objects used when giving or taking pleasurable things: envelopes, postpaks, grocery sacks, shopping bags, bread bags, wrapping paper. Each poem, one about shopping malls, the other about architectural demolition, has been broken down into small shards and printed back-to-back on the torn shreds. They turn hypnotically, picking up even the slightest air-current, generating multiple poetic readings.

Question plenitude: windows and rainstorms,
our strict observance of a world that is now a store of wealth,
our pittance of crows, and stones, the tail ends of our journeys.

Build silhouettes: of hoppers, wheeled cauldrons and trolleys
that lack any opening to interpretation or to the story world.

ANGELA GARDNER

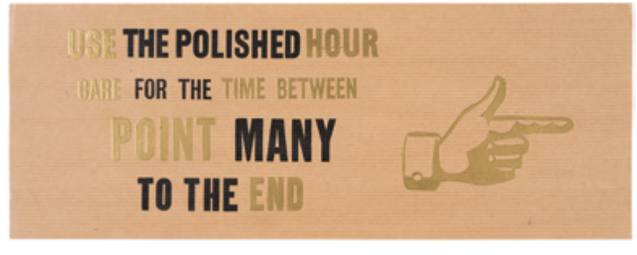


3. WALL READING

Secret Life, 2014
Caren Florance & Melinda Smith
Digital broadside on archival photo paper. 594 x 420.
Edition of 5. PHOTO: CF.

Be Spoken To, 2014
Caren Florance & Melinda Smith
Letterpress and embossing powder, Perspex
(originally installed on the faces of MoAD vintage signs).
Dimensions variable.

Left:
Original installation at the Australian Museum of Democracy
PHOTO: MARK NOLAN.



CF + MELINDA SMITH

5. BOOK LOUNGE

5A *The Future, Unimagine*, 2017
Angela Gardner & Caren Florance
in association with Recent Work Press
Poetry volume. 203 x 228. 48pp.

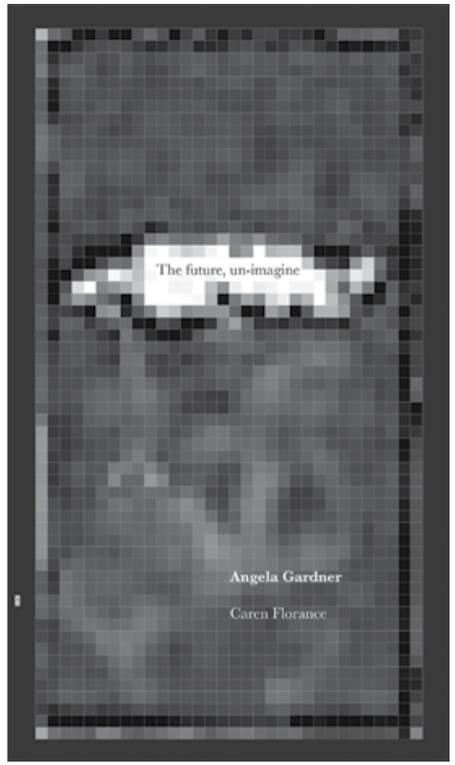
5B *Members Only*, 2017
Melinda Smith & Caren Florance
in association with Recent Work Press.
Poetry volume. 203 x 228. 48pp.

5C *Swipe*, 2015
Caren Florance, Owen Bullock, Monica Carroll, Tania de Rozario, Angela Gardner, Philip Gross, Nicci Haynes, Jacqui Malins, Paul Munden, Shags, Melinda Smith, Shane Strange, Jen Webb
Hand-sewn zine. c.199 x 140. 16pp.

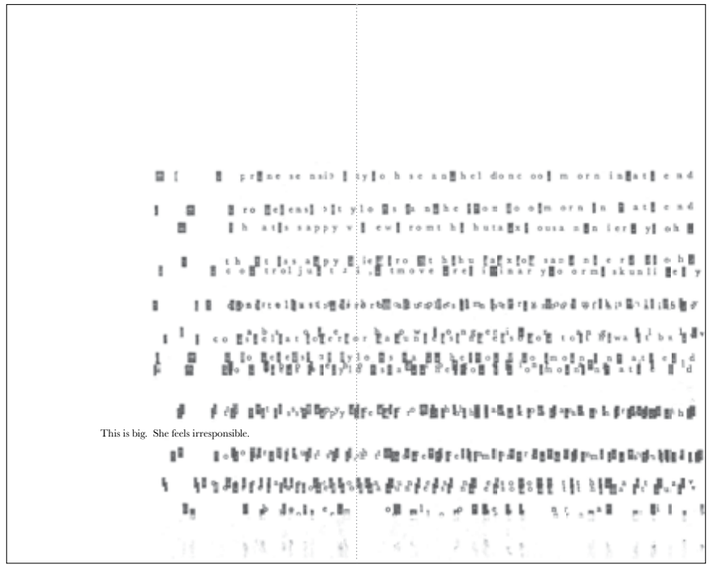
5D *Interference*, 2014. Angela Gardner, *etc*.
Handsewn chapbook. 210 x 130. 24pp.

5E *Tracer*, 2015. Owen Bullock
Handsewn chapbook. 280 x 100. 24pp.

Small publications, produced for wider audiences than a gallery can provide. These are sold in bookstores and zine fairs. Some are part of broader projects: *Members Only* is a modified reproduction of *1962: Be Spoken To*, but *The future, unimagine*, is an original publication, drawing from but separate to *Working Papers*. The *Swipe* project is essentially one zine, with copies scripted by poets and artists and reproduced in short print runs.



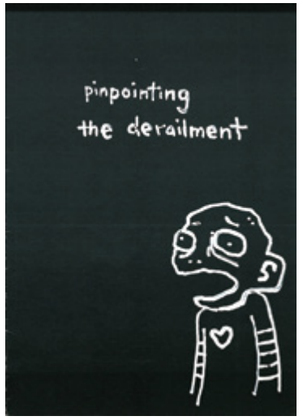
5A



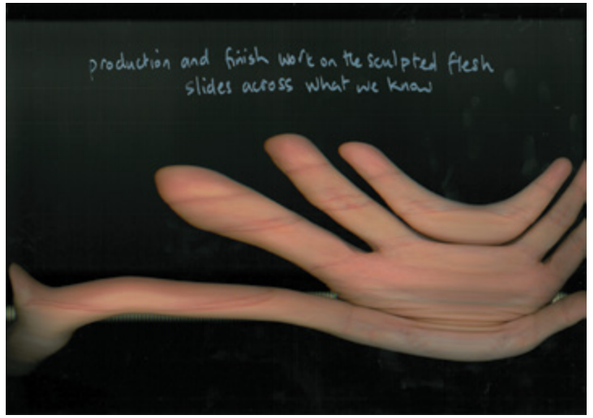
5B

ORIGINAL: CAREN FLORANCE

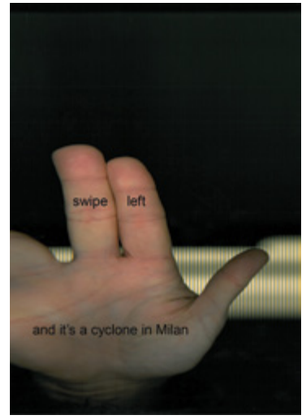
SHANE STRANGE



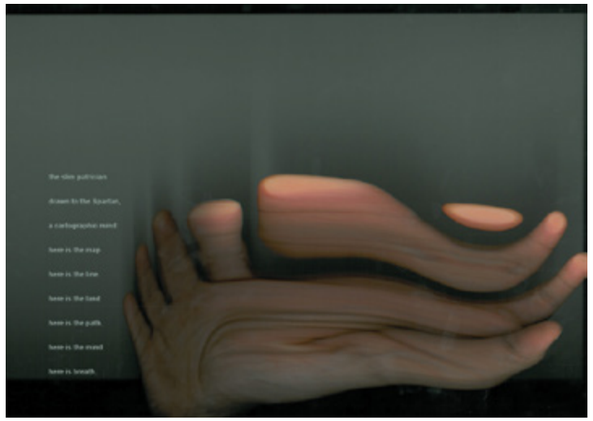
SHAGS



ANGELA GARDNER



JEN WEBB

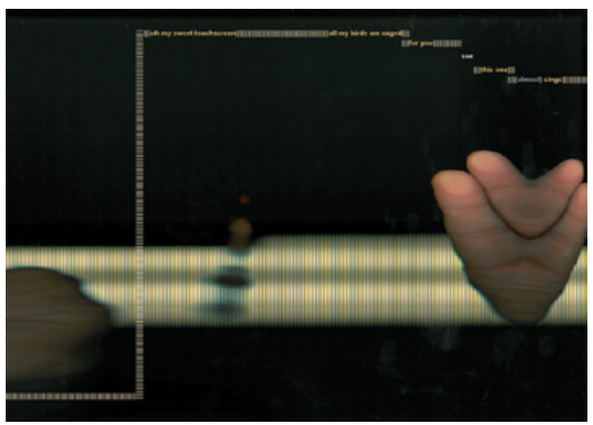


OWEN BULLOCK

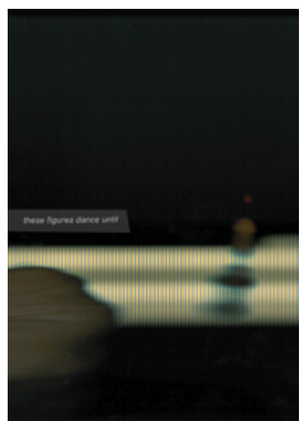
PAUL MUNDEN

TANIA DE ROZARIO

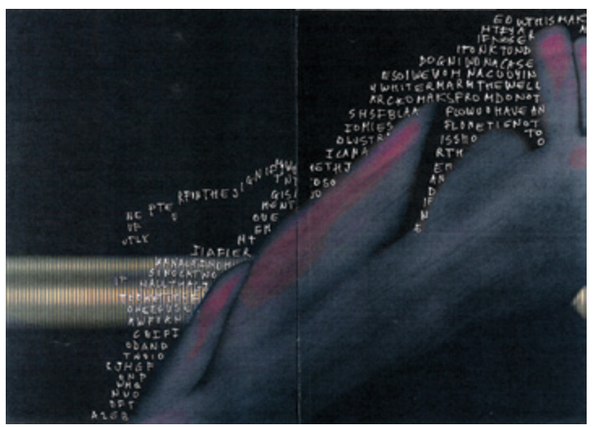
MELINDA SMITH



PHILIP GROSS

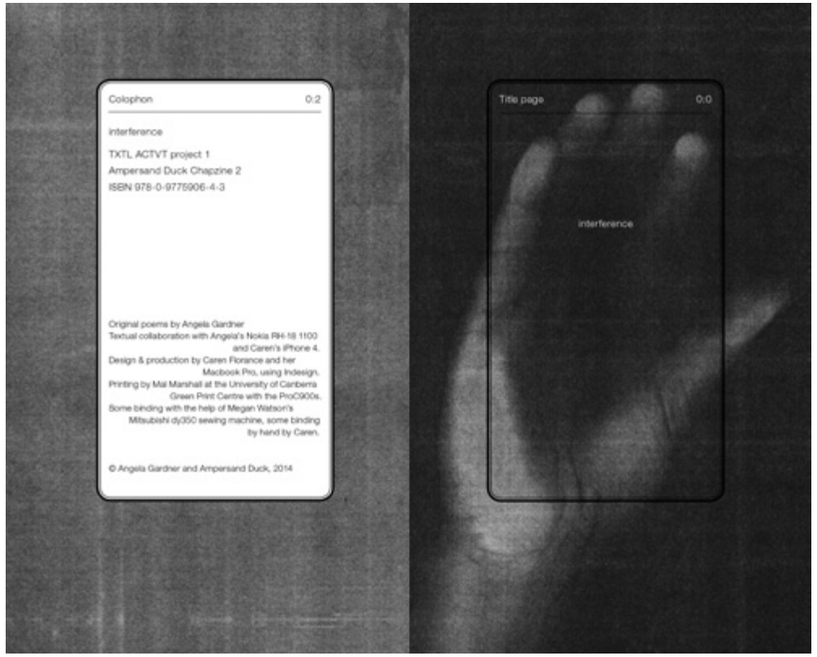


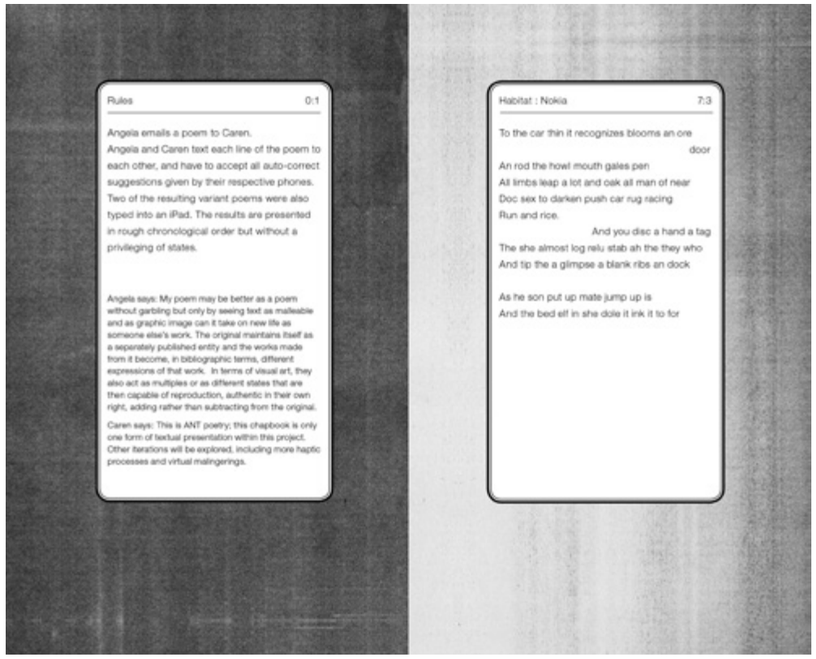
JACQUI MALINS



NICCI HAYNES

MONICA CARROLL





CF + ANGELA GARDNER ETC

HALF-LIGHT

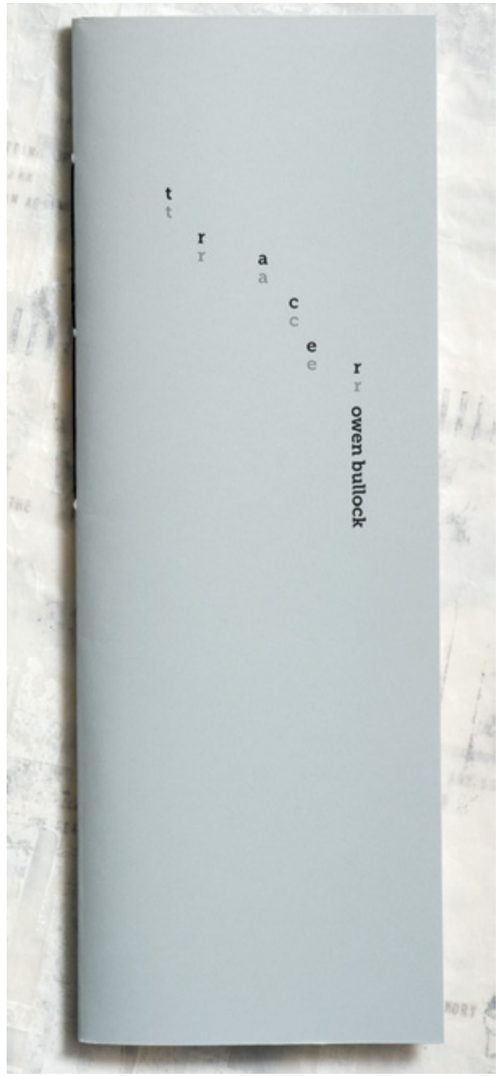
I'll start you painting flat. Objects next:
modeling three dimensions until light-gleam
appears on something. Garment folds, soft
dark of velvet, a feather in an angel's wing.
Distance then to frame — landscape
a mirror — so real birds dash against it.
Face and hands last, unless you count
everything pulled from background by light
and darkness a stillness as it develops.

NOKIA

I'll start you painting flat. Ma of
One tip eh until jig gleam
Appears on something. Has folds rod
Far of velvet a debt in an bog who.
Dirt them to era landscape
A miss so sea air far chains it.
Ebb and hands lap told you ant
Due pulled from background by light
And darkness a rug as it feud

iPHONE

I'll star you painted flat. On he be:
Model the dimly unto lug-gleam
Appears on something. Harm do, sod
Dark of cel, a death in an angel' swing
Dust then to far – landscape
A more – so tea birds dad aha it.
Face and ham last, unless you count
Everything put from background by light
And darkens a stillness as I development.



From ON THE FIRST ARRANGEMENT OF 'REDEX'

Links from text to narrative have new possibilities. Writing embraces language; type-setting makes the words. Combine. Action stronger than in a poem. Than a poem of mine offers. Rules of language compromised the way a new experience shakes values. Layers exposed. Real layers. We're. Wayfinding. The eye struggles; haptic guides. Someone asks the awkward questions. They are to be admired. Narrative time passing. I wish I had said that. She's good. Turning the page and the writing backwards, upside down, I have to re-invent my reading. Ys are a good one. Whys are a good one. Wise are a good one. … But not without a struggle. Not as easy as spelling. Except. Except. A lone Greek word is an exception. Villify. Victory. …

What I wrote before was different

CF + OWEN BULLOCK

6. FORMAL READING

6A *1962: Be Spoken To*, 2014–17,
Caren Florance & Melinda Smith

Letterpress and screenprint on Magnani Avoria Vergata paper, 2 parts, handsewn in archival Tyvek 'ghost bag'. Edition of 5. 505 x 357 x 14. 8 + 48pp.

A year in the life of Old Parliament House, constructed as a twelve month cycle of signs and rooms. Each month has a theme, with a 'feature' poem harvested from Hansard or other public records and an additional anagram poem exploring an aspect of the topic. Through all the pages there are extra anagrams, original poems and subtle ornamentation. While the framework is screenprinted, everything else has been set and inked by hand using letterpress printing.

PARLIAMENT

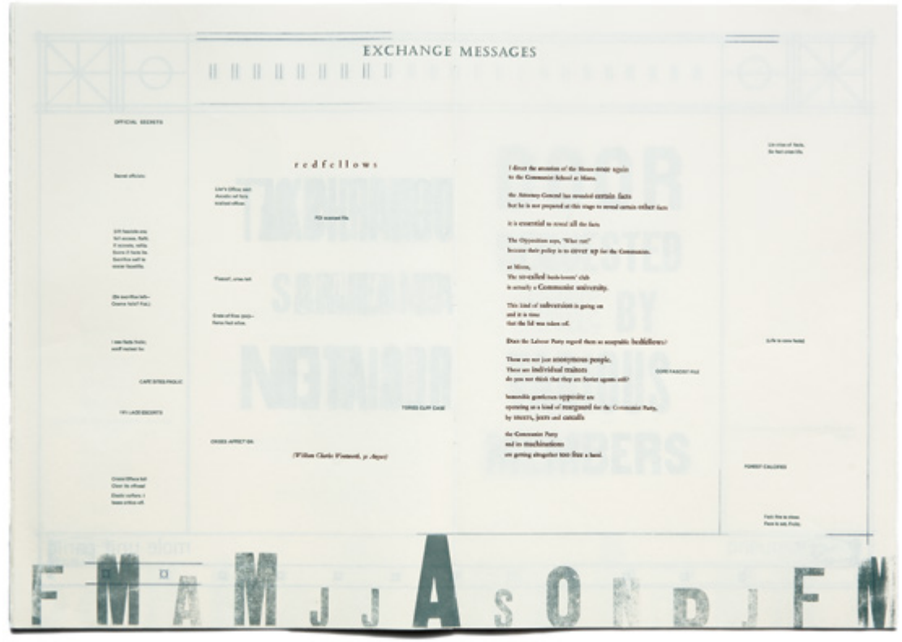
Partial men.
Male in. Part
man, part lie
(rampant lie).

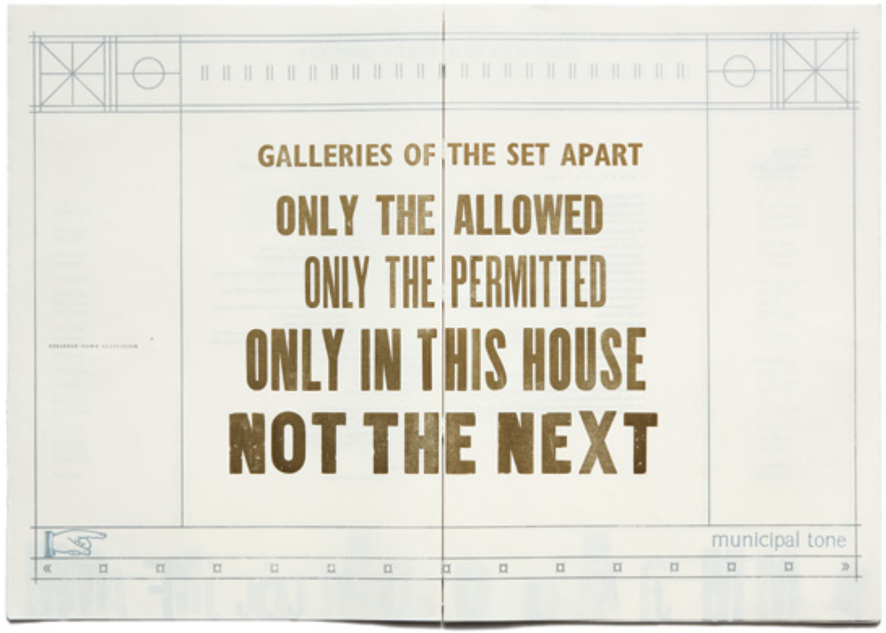
Rant, lie, map,
lie, mar, pant.
Mantra pile.

Real man pit
in a trample
armpit lane
latrine map.

I arm planet
I mar planet
man at peril

: remap at nil.





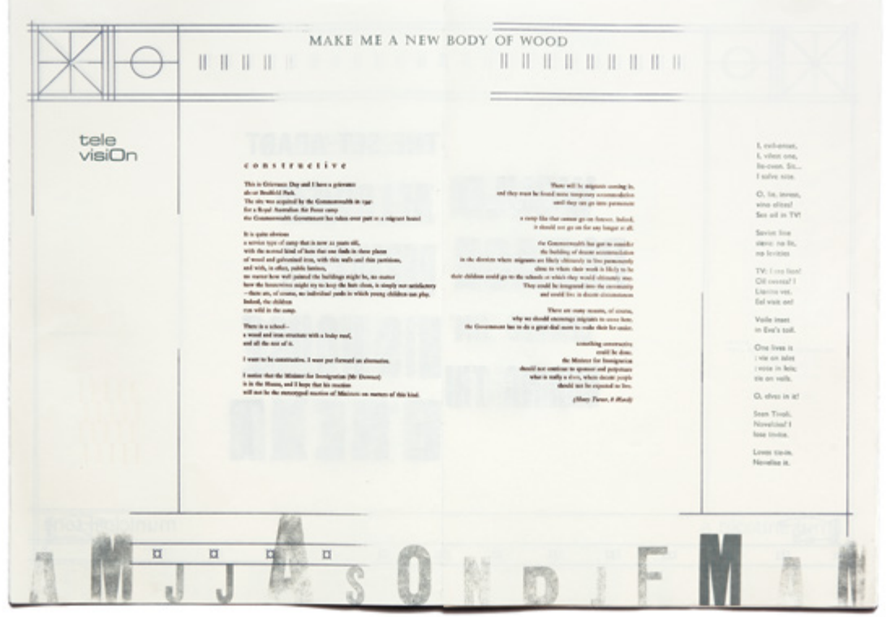
GOUGH WHITLAM

I'm law-goth. Hug ?
Ah, go with glum:
two-gal-hug him !

Might hug AWOL.

High-low gamut,
tough whim lag.

I glow. Math? Ugh !
Might laugh. Ow.



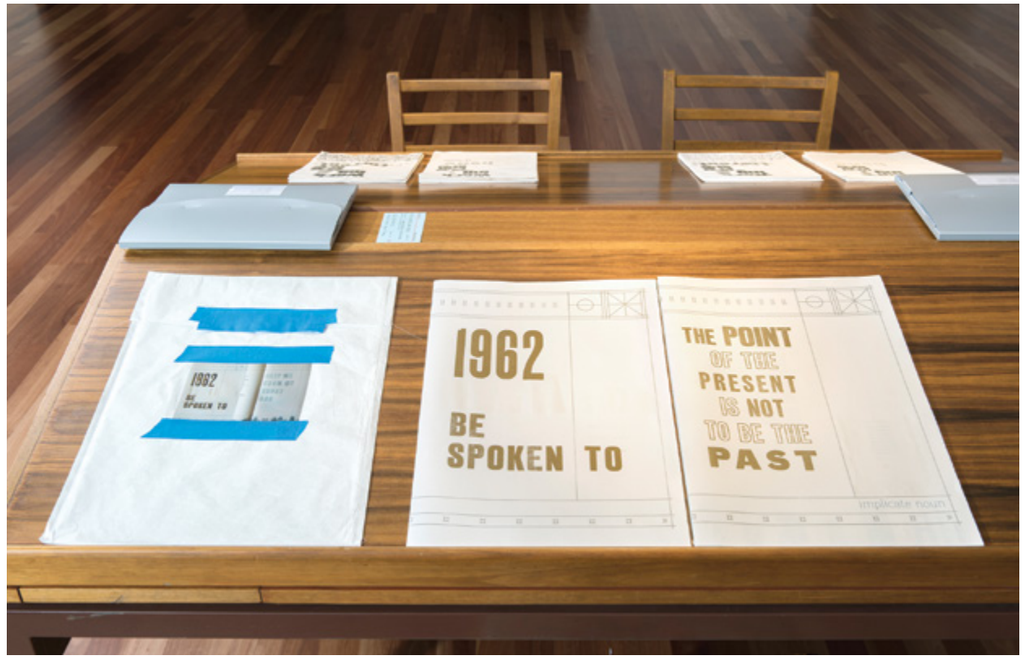
ROBERT MENZIES

Robert Menzies,
sterner zombie
breezes into Mr,
rezones timbre

restore biz men
rezone Ms tribe

bronzes tire me

CF + MELINDA SMITH

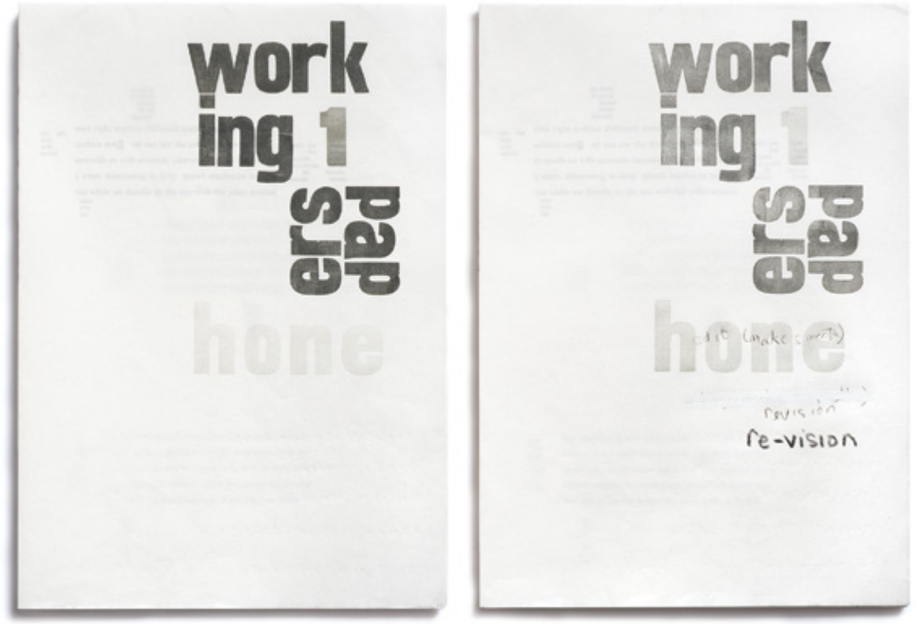


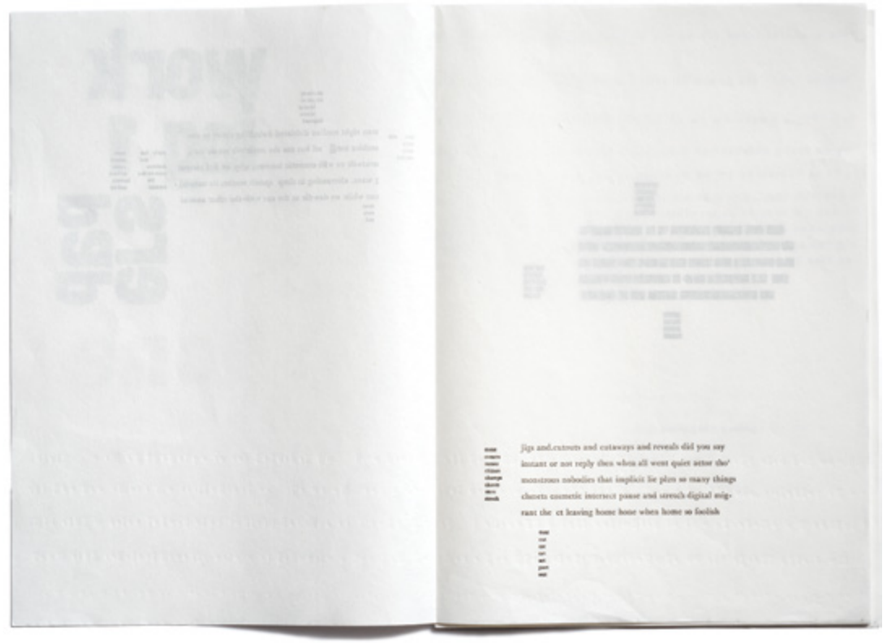
CF + MELINDA SMITH

6. FORMAL READING

6B *Working Papers: hone & torrent*, 2015–17
Caren Florance & Angela Gardner
Letterpress and drawing on Gyokurya washi, unbound, housed in archival polyprop boxes. 350 x 250 x 10.
Variable edition of 3: AG:CF (x2), AG:CF:AG.

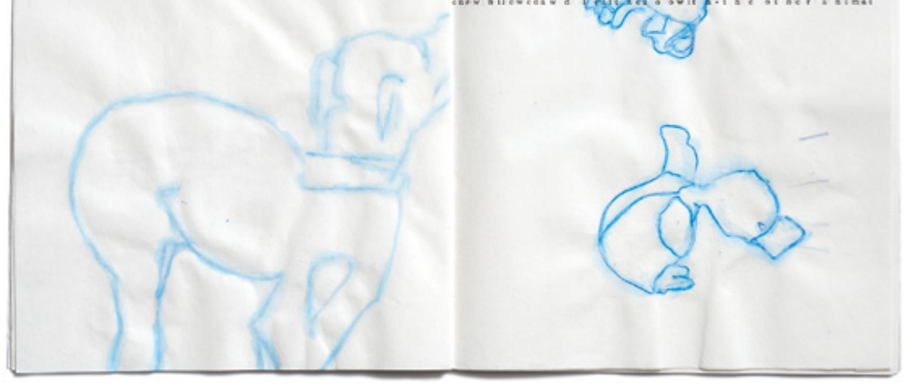
This is a playful, informal exploration into glitch, discovery and disrupted page-space. Angela set some letterpress type as a stream of consciousness, and two of the many possible directions were explored: delving into alternatives and torrenting text into image, both providing other avenues of meaning generation. When I finished playing with the press, a set went to Angela, who responded graphically using editorial marks, cancellation, and inanimate figuration, resulting in two versions of the same work.

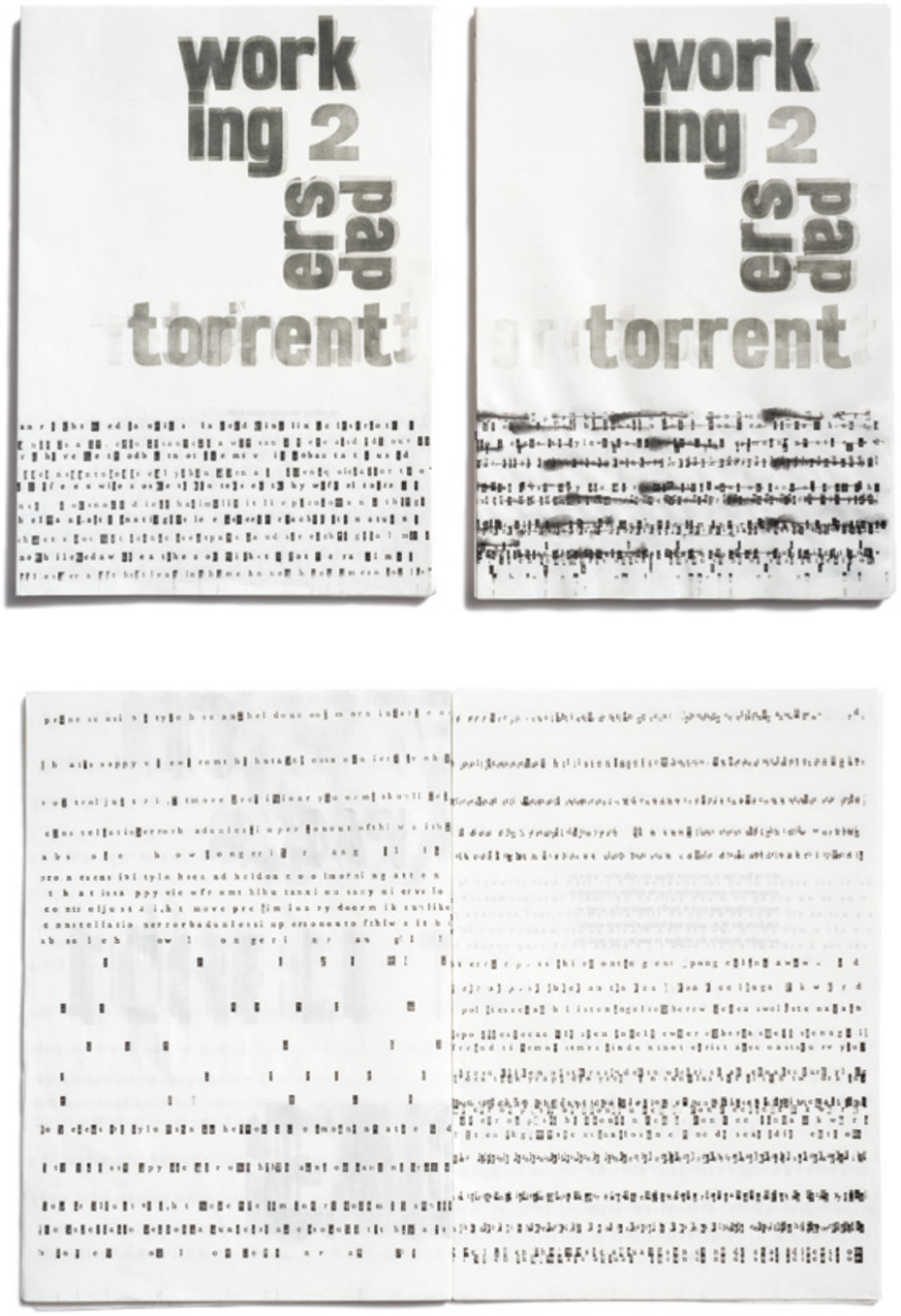


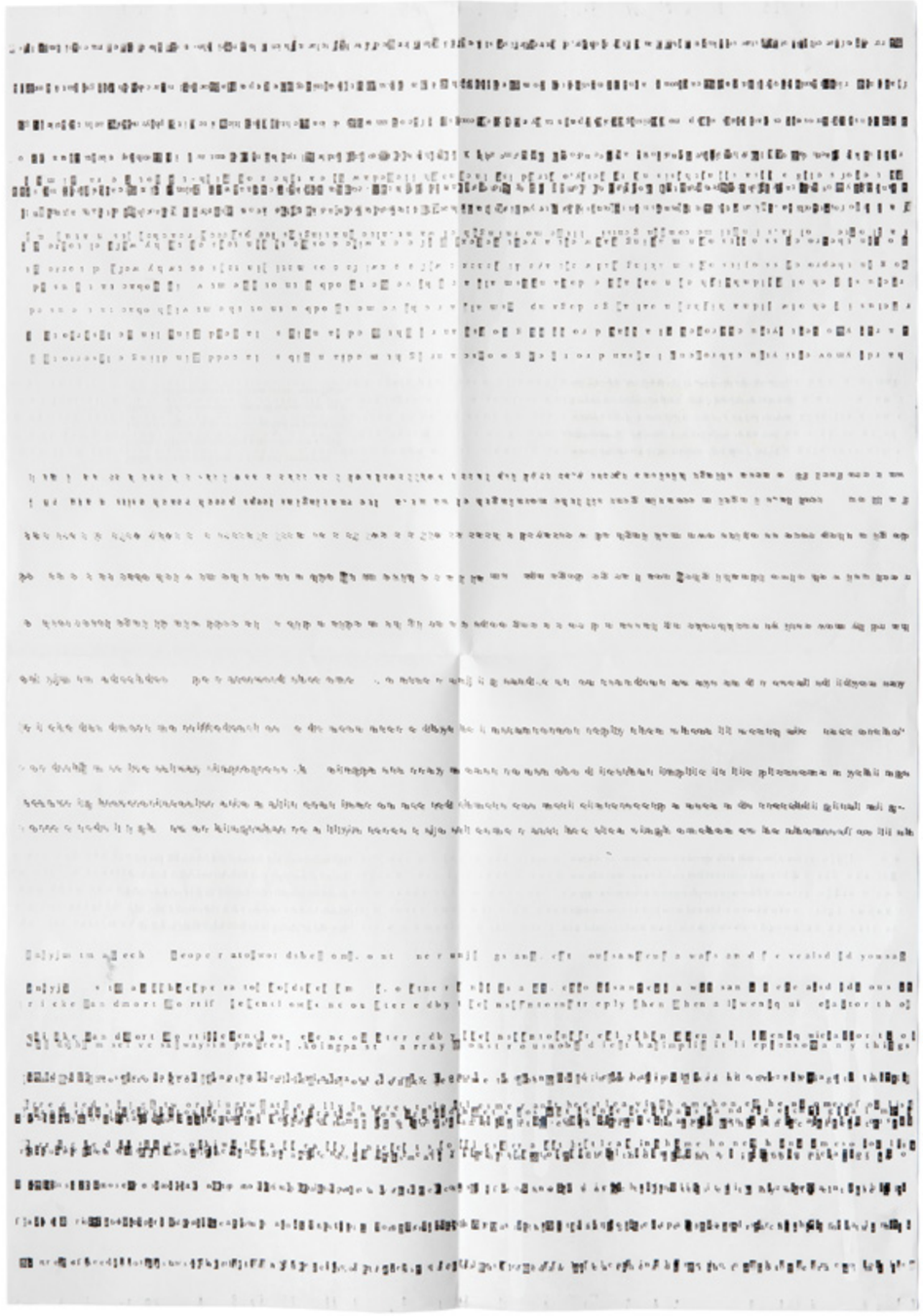


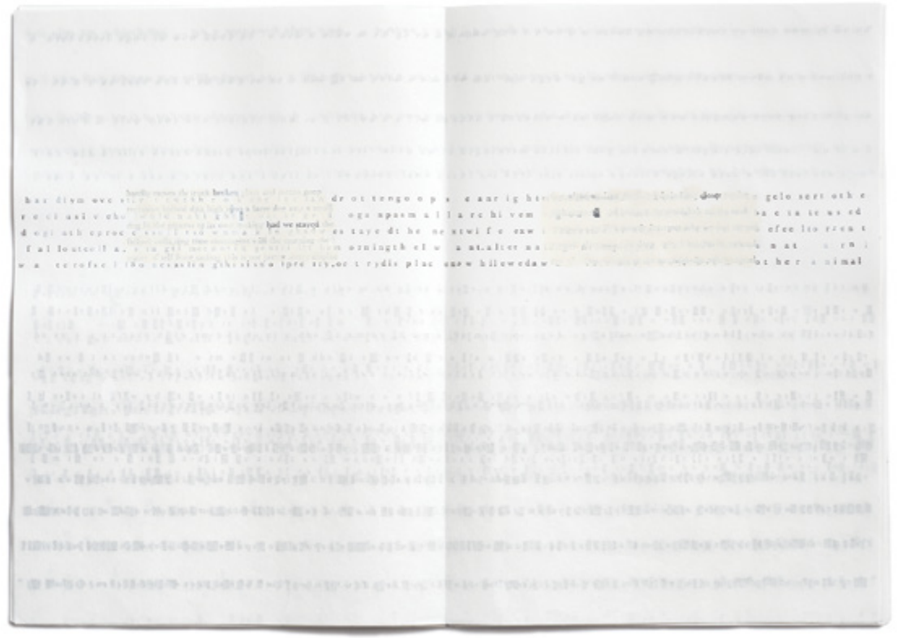
encountered by the

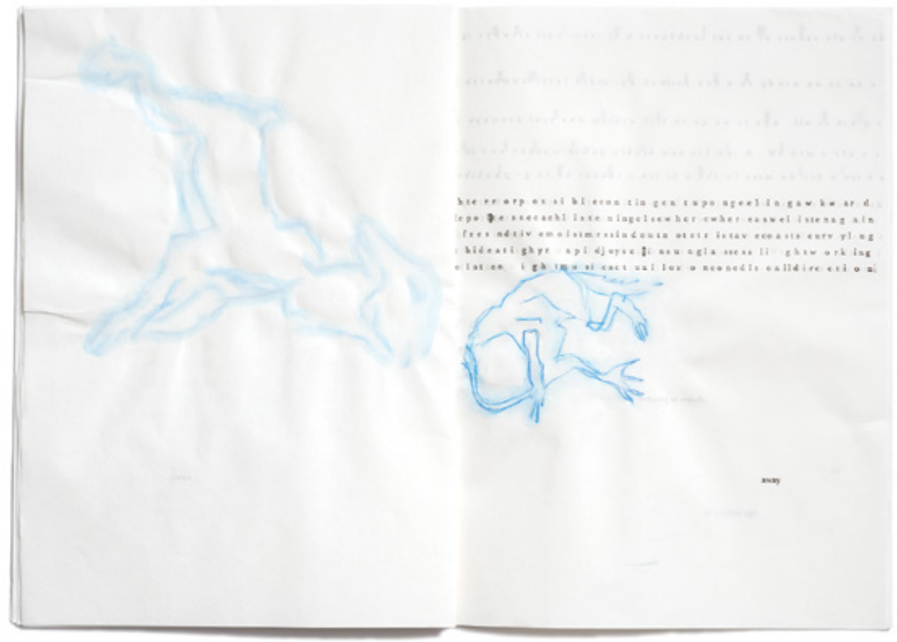
words themselves




working 2
papers
torrent



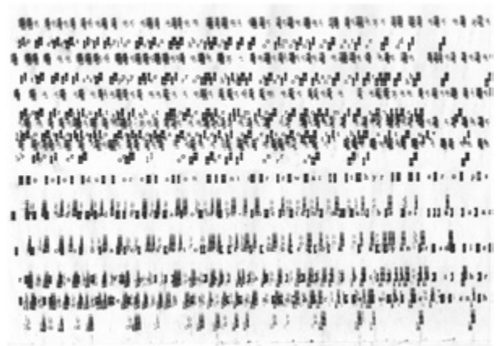




CF + ANGELA GARDNER

6. WALL READING 2

Jostles / Posterpage, 2016
Caren Florance & Angela Gardner
Large scale digital reprints of details from *Working Papers*.
Toner on Tyvek. 841 x 1189.



7. KITCHEN TABLE

7A *Touch to Activate*, 2015. Caren Florance
Letterpress & offset ink on paper, trifold. 300 x 200. 6pp.
Variable edition of 12. Light and dark variants on display.

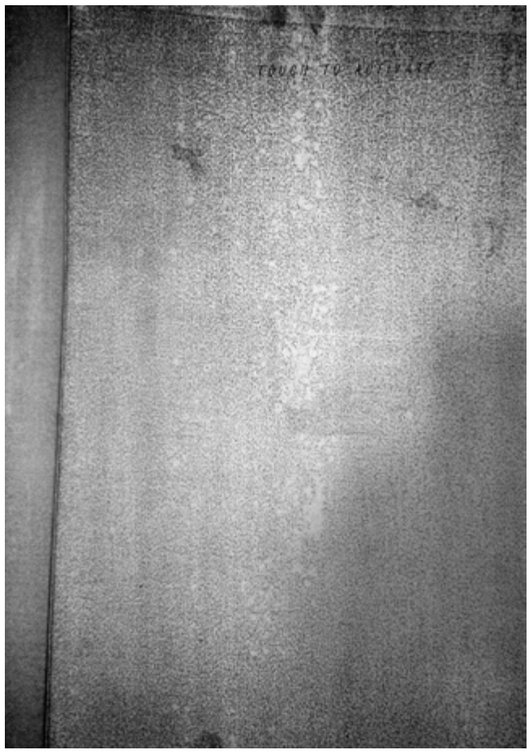
7B *Redex*, 2014. Caren Florance & Owen Bullock
Letterpress on Whitetrace. 207 x 205. 4pp. Edition of 160.
130 were printed for the *Parenthesis* 27 Deluxe Folio.

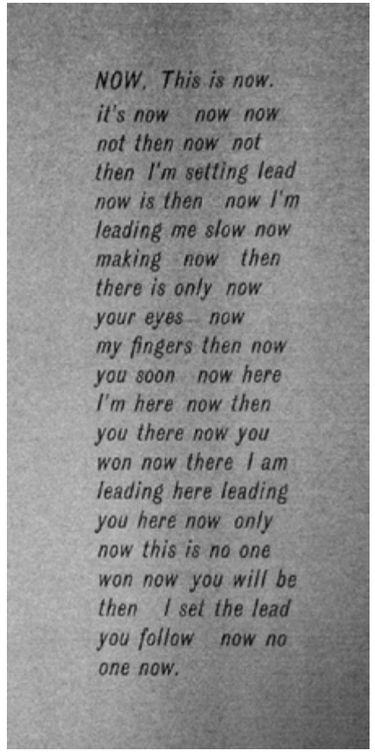
7C *Touch 00100000*, 2016. Caren Florance
Spiralbound typed book, jar, tweezers. 297 x 220 x 20. Unique.

7D *Proseity*, 2015. Caren Florance.
Hardback print-on-demand artist book of reproduced offset letterpress. 200 x 130 x 7. 24pp.

Touch to Activate meditates on the temporal space between author and reader. When reading *Redex*, it is a book: the translucent paper allows multiple views and multiple readings as it turns in the hand. Without the hand, it is a folded print. *Touch 00100000* asks the reader to puncture it, create space, be a co-author. *Proseity* revels in the poetics of the page: the prosaic textblock as a zone of interiority.

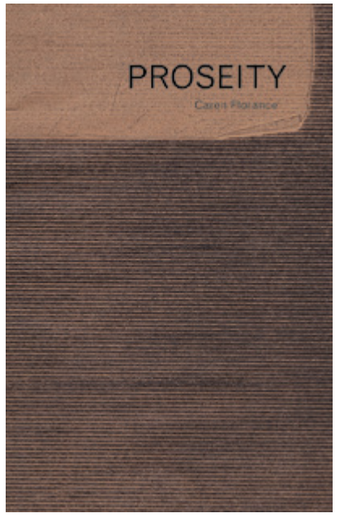
7A



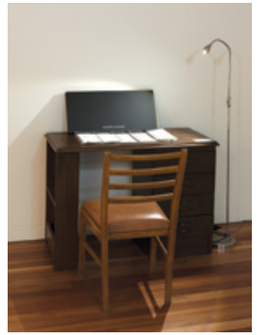


7B

7C



7D



8. SOLITARY READING

Shared Rooms: Poems by Anna Akhmatova with Translations by Natalie Staples and Imitations by Rosemary Dobson and David Campbell, 2002
Caren Florance

Letterpress and monoprints on Zerkall wove paper, in screenprinted acetate envelopes. Housed in a Perspex drawer & cloth-covered slipcase. Edition of 5. 620 x 315 x 32.

Four poems in the original Russian by Akhmatova, each with three versions: one literal translation and two transcreations by respected Australian poets. They live in a drawer, and can be rearranged in any order, removing any sense of hierarchy.

From Anna Akhmatova, *Northern Elegies: The Third*

Natalie Staples (literal translation)

Me, Like a river,
The harsh epoch turned.
They have supplanted my life.
Into another source,
Past other things it began to flow.,
And I do not know my own shores.

David Campbell

Me, like a river, the harsh age turned aside.
How many songs of mine, unwritten, sing
In secret! I may choke of songs denied.

Rosemary Dobson

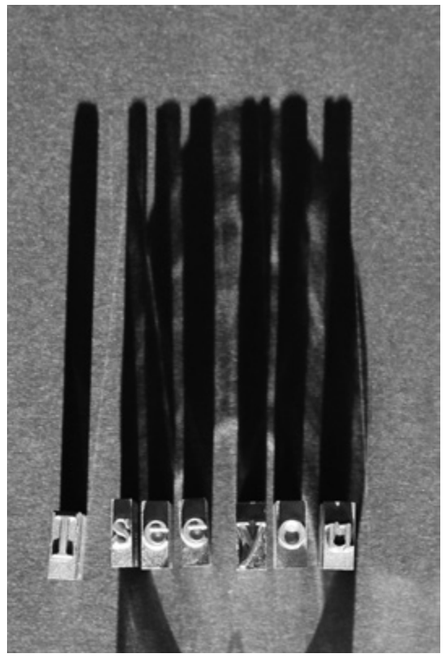
This epoch turns my life
As though a stream were turned
To flow through foreign lands.
I long for shores I know.

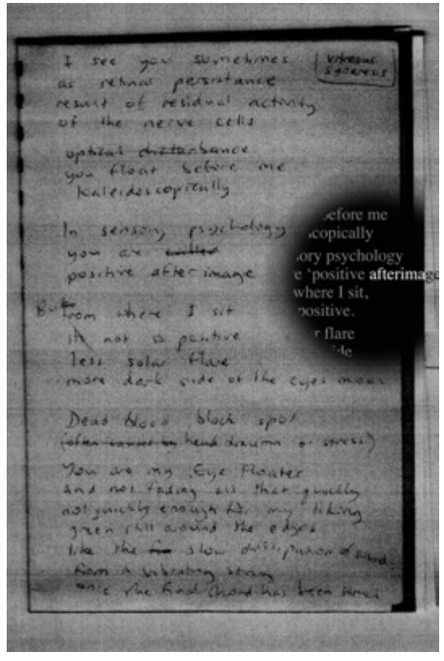
9. DIGITAL READING

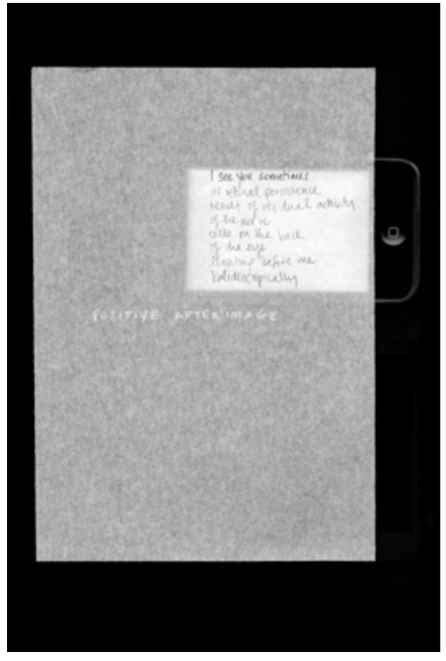
Vitreous Syneresis (I see you sometimes), 2014
Caren Florance & Sarah Rice.
Eight manipulated digital prints on archival rag paper, digital animation on iPad. 200 x 300. Edition of 10.

Vitreous syneresis is an eye condition in which the clarity of the vitreous humor is altered and produces the symptom of eye floaters: black spots that swim and flash in the periphery of vision. They appear, often causing distress and confusion, and then either disappear or linger, depending on various factors. Often the sufferer can learn to ignore them, in the way that we only notice the feeling of our clothes on our body if we let ourselves think about it.

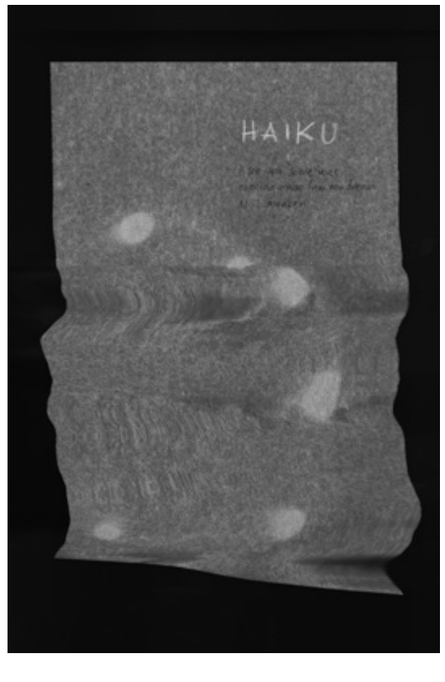
Sarah's poem, *Vitreous Syneresis*, explores the traces of relationships as they fade from your life, and the sense that a memory is following you, haunting you, when in fact it is you, yourself, carrying the trace of experience and emotion through time and place. This work explores every stage of the poem from first spark to final state.



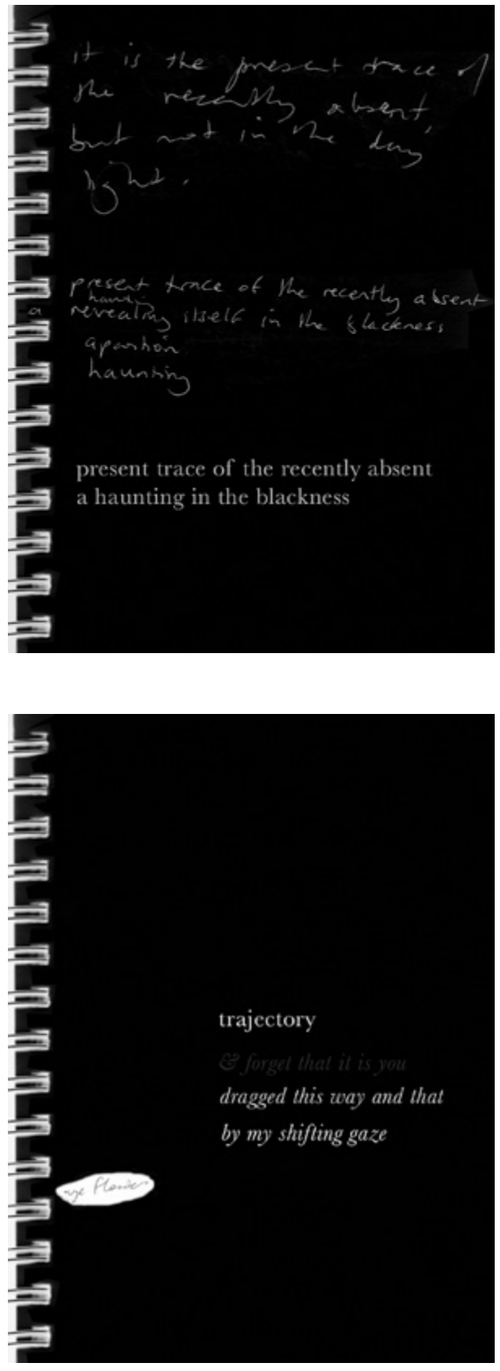




I see you sometimes
as retinal persistence
residual activity
of the nerve cells
You float before me
left to right
kaleidoscopically
In sensory perception
you are positive afterimage
from where I sit
not so positive
less solar flare
more dark side
of the eye's moon
dead blood black spot
You are my Eye Floater fading
not fast enough for my liking
Vitreous
Syneresis
arranged by
Caren Florance


HAIKU
dead blood black spot
You are my Eye Floater
fading
not fast enough for my liking
green still around the edges
and
pulsating.

After-glow only occurs
in ~~a void~~ the dark
in trance,
in darkness,
in the
blackness,
don't stop staring
I fix my eye
on you
present trace of the recently absent
a haunting in the blackness


it is the present trace of
the recently absent,
but not in the day
light.
present trace of the recently absent
a haunting revealing itself in the blackness
apparition
haunting
present trace of the recently absent
a haunting in the blackness
trajectory
& forget that it is you
dragged this way and that
by my shifting gaze
eye floater

CAREN FLORANCE

Biographical/Education

Born in Wagga, Australia
Lives and works Canberra, ACT

1989 BA (English/Classics), ANU
1992 MA(Pass) (English), UNSW Canberra
2002 BAVis(Hons), Printmedia & Drawing, ANU SOA
2013– PhD, CCCR, FAD, Uni of Canberra

Solo Exhibitions

2017 *Reading Spaces*, East Space, ACT
2016 *Letter Ess*, CCAS City, ACT
2012 *Handset: Letterpress Poetry Broadsides*, UNSW Canberra Library, ACT
2010 *Prime*, Otakou Press, University of Otago Library, Dunedin, NZ
2009 *Pressings: Recycled Bookwork*, Megalo, ACT

Selected Curation

2016 *Material Poetics* (with Jen Webb), ANCA, ACT
2013 *Broad*, ANU SOA Foyer Gallery, ACT
100% Books by Canberra Artists, Watson Arts Centre, ACT
2009 *Books to Hold or Let Go*, Craft ACT

Selected Group Exhibitions (from 2010)

2017 *Beauties and Beasts*, Belconnen Art Space, ACT
Edge, ANU School of Art Foyer Gallery, ACT
Amplify & Multiply: Activist Ephemera, Coburn Gallery, Colorado US
2016 *Libris Award*, Artspace Mackay, QLD
Love is in the Air, CCAS, ACT
Seeking Refuge, Tuggeranong Arts Centre (TAC), ACT
The Encyclopaedia of Forgotten Things, Belconnen Arts Centre (BAC), ACT
Tracer (for You Are Here Festival), CMAG, ACT
Speak Uneasy, Smiths Alternative (for Noted Festival), ACT
2015 *Artists' Books*, Henglu Gallery, Hangzhou, China
Artists' Books + Zines Saved my Life! Spectrum Project Space, ECU, Perth
Traces & Hauntings, BAC, ACT
Between the Sheets, Gallery East, Perth WA
Fremantle Arts Centre Print Awards, Fremantle Arts Centre, WA
Small Publishers, Brenda May Gallery, Sydney NSW
2014 *Bespoke: Design for the People*, MoAD, ACT (on display for 12 months)
Mirror of the World: Books and Ideas, State Library of Victoria, VIC
Wordsmith, M16 Gallery, Canberra, ACT
Zinestars, TAC, ACT
Open Books Plus, Logan Gallery, QLD & UNSW Canberra Library, ACT
Unruly Orchestrations, BAC, ACT
2013 *Book Art Object*, UNSW Canberra Library, ACT
Book Art Object at Impact 8, Dundee, Scotland
Shaping Canberra, ANU School of Art Gallery
Inhabit, Craft ACT
Intensity of Purpose, CMAG, ACT
Libris Award 2013, Artspace Mackay, QLD
Community and Context, MADA Gallery, Monash University Caulfield, VIC
2012 *Merchants of War*, Damien Minton Gallery, Sydney NSW
Lessons in History II: Democracy, Grahame Galleries, Brisbane, Qld
2012 *Fremantle Arts Centre Print Awards*, WA
Transit of Venus, ANU Photospace, ACT
Freak of Nature, King Family Space, Uni of Colorado in Boulder, USA
Material World, ANCA, ACT
2011 *Book Art Object at Impact 7*, Monash Caulfield, VIC
2010 *Print Big*, Megalo @ the Fitter's Workshop, Kingston ACT
Libris Awards, Artspace Mackay, QLD
Paper Works, Brenda May Gallery, Sydney, NSW
3 Chords & the Truth, ANCA, ACT

Awards and Residencies

2015 ANCA Art Writing Award ($500)
2014 MoAD/Craft ACT: Bespoke Project Residency ($1,000)
2012 Non-acquisitive Award (+ acquisition), Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award Supported by Little Creatures Brewing ($5,000)
2011 artsACT Artists-in-Schools, O'Connor Co-operative, ACT: Postmark Mail Art ($20,000)
2010 Printer-in-Residence, Otakou Press, Otago University Library, Dunedin NZ

Collections

British Library, UK
National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Sanshang Contemporary Art Museum, China
UNESCO Noma Concours, Japan
University of Otago Library, NZ
National Gallery of Australia
National Library of Australia
State Library of Queensland
State Library of Victoria
Monash University Rare Books Collection
Melbourne University Rare Books Collection
University of Queensland Library
University of Sydney Library
University of WA Library
ACT Heritage Library
Canberra Museum and Galleries
Artspace Mackay
City of Fremantle Art Collection
UNSW Canberra
Petr Herel/GIW Collection, ANU
E+ABS Collection, ANU
National and international private collections

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Review Short: Derek Beaulieu's *Kern. Cordite Poetry Review*, 12 April 2015: http://cordite.org.au/reviews/florance-beaulieu/

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Stop the Press: the Allure of Ink. *Artlink* 30.2, 2010: 42-44.

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Professional memberships

CraftACT (Accredited Professional Member)
Australian Book Design Association (ABDA) (Professional Member)
UC Centre for Creative & Cultural Research (CCCR) (HDR Member)
Print Council of Australia (ACT Rep 2011–2015)
ANCA Board (2010–2013)
Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild (Editor 2007–2015; Vice-President 2012–2015)
Bibliographical Society of Australia & NZ
Megalo Print Studio & Gallery
NZ Association of Handcraft Printers

Melinda Smith won the Prime Minister's Literary Award for her fourth book of poems, *Drag down to unlock or place an emergency call*. Her work has appeared widely in Australia and overseas. She was Poetry Editor of the *Canberra Times* from 2015 to mid-2017. Her latest collection, *Goodbye Cruel*, was published by Pitt St Poetry in 2017.

Angela Gardner is an award-winning poet with four books: *Parts of Speech* (UQP, 2007), *Views of the Hudson* (Shearsman, 2009), *The Told World* (Shearsman Books, UK, 2014) and *Thing&Unthing* (Vagabond Press, 2014) as well as two fine press books *twelve labours* and *The NightLadder* (both lighttrappress 2009). She edits at www.foame.org and is a visual artist with work in both national and international collections.

READING SPACES
Caren Florance (*etc*)

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