

G. IN WHICH THE PRESS STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE NOTION THAT GOOD FOUNDATION COURSES ARE MORE VITAL THAN EVER.

Each year the dynamic of the Press is shaped by a changing cohort of University of Sunderland Foundation students. Once a week during term-time, the Press works with students in ‘production meetings’ to complete printing jobs or explore experimental approaches as a group. Profits generated from printing are put into student projects and the resources of the risograph studio. The ambition is to build students’ independent editorial and design skills whilst also challenging their methods through working with visiting artists or participating in off-site projects or public events.

1. The A2 Riso duplicator is manufactured mainly for export to Russia as well as smaller neighbouring countries where the machines are used to print local newspapers and marketing material. In Europe a small number of the machines have been secured for Art and Design purposes.

2. This text was printed on the A2 Riso duplicator at the Charles Nypels Laboratory in the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, the Netherlands, on August 31, 2017. Since 2014, the Jan van Eyck has coordinated a biennial symposium, affectionately called ‘Magical Riso’, which brings together Riso presses from all round the world to share approaches and print together.

B. IN WHICH THE PRESS MUSES UPON WHAT IT MEANS THAT A BOAT WITH A DIFFERENT NAME MOORS ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE RIVER EACH WEEK.

Foundation Press is currently based within the National Glass Centre, Sunderland, where it utilises the University of Sunderland’s amazing risograph studio. The riso studio is based at the centre of the student work spaces on the Foundation Art & Design programme, a gesture emphasising the press as an intersection for different specialist interests. The press is not limited to one space or one type of printing. Recently it has temporarily relocated to other spaces, including Chapter Arts Centre (Cardiff), BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (Gateshead) and Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (Sunderland). It would also like to imagine projects for non-arts spaces and venues outside of the UK.

3. The Port of Sunderland was originally constructed in the early 18th century at the mouth of the River Wear. It was designed to handle import and export from the then booming coal and shipbuilding industries. Today the port is more sedate, but each week a new boat – often travelling via the Baltic Sea – arrives and moors opposite the National Glass Centre.

4. Foundation Press has maintained a record of the boats via Instagram (@foundation.press #boatoftheweek). Recent boats include ‘Corona’, ‘Emma’, ‘BBC Neptune’, ‘Gann’, ‘Amanda C’, ‘Calm Bay’, ‘Sider Moon’, ‘Louis’, ‘Pretty Universe’ and ‘Global Horizon’.

C. IN WHICH THE PRESS REFLECTS UPON A TECHNICIAN’S REMARK THAT WE SHOULD PUT A SHREDDER AT THE END OF OUR PRINTER DESTROYING ALL THINGS WE MAKE, IN ORDER TO SAVE TIME.

11. The Codex Amiatinus is an 8th century illustrated Bible produced on the site of the Wearmouth monastery (now St.Peter’s Church) next to the National Glass Centre, Sunderland. The monk and abbot of the monastery, Ceolfriht (who commissioned the bible in 692), died en route to Rome whilst taking the book to the Pope. The book went missing, eventually turning up in Monte Amiata in Tuscany.

5. The Foundation course is a preparatory Art & Design course in the UK which works to build basic visual and creative knowledge in students prior to studying a specialist subject at degree level or in industry. The course (conventionally lasting 1 year) aims to provide students with systems for independent and self-reflective production – endorsing an interdisciplinary and collaborative view of the creative fields.

6. Foundation Press is particularly inspired by several foundation courses that ran in the 1960s/70s such as the Groundcourse set up in 1963 by Roy Ascott at Ealing College of Art (and later in Ipswich) or the courses led by Eric Atkinson (with input from Canadian Fluxus artist Robin Page) at Leeds College of Art and by Tom Hudson at Cardiff College of Art. Characteristics of some of these courses included the use of role-play and performative tactics designed to encourage students to question who they were and how they related to wider society (as well as the roles of teacher and student).

7. The Groundcourse was a two year foundation led by Roy Ascott at Ealing College of Art (1961-64) and then at Ipswich School of Art (1964-67). An experiment in radical pedagogy, Groundcourse methodically applied cybernetic theories concerning systemic relations, communication, interactivity, participation and feedback to an everyday art school environment.

8. The courses at Ealing, Ipswich, Leeds and Cardiff built upon the earlier teaching model called ‘Basic Design’, pioneered by artists Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton in Newcastle University and Harry Thubron and Tom Hudson in Leeds. Basic Design was a programme inspired by Bauhaus and the theoretical writing of Herbert Read where, instead of teaching specific skills associated with particular disciplines of art and design, visual literacy was taught in terms of the use of colour, the establishment of form and the construction of space. Harry Thubron originally began his teaching career at Sunderland School of Art (now the University of Sunderland).

9. In April 2017, Foundation Press presented ‘Colour Experiment’ at Chapter Arts Centre Cardiff – a 3-day workshop inspired by Tom Hudson’s performative colour workshops taught at Cardiff College of Art in the late 1960s. Tom Hudson originally studied Fine Art at Sunderland School of Art.

10. As of September 2017, Foundation courses were still free of charge to 18 year old students leaving school.

D. IN WHICH THE PRESS WONDERS IF IT’S TRUE THAT EVERYONE HAS A BOOK INSIDE THEM.

The Press supports artists, designers, writers and musicians in making books, performances and printed ephemera. We are starting to consider a more specific curatorial and ethical agenda regarding who we work with and why we want to work with them. We want to facilitate opportunities for people who are currently not being heard, to initiate conversations which are not currently being conducted.

12. Ceolfriht Press was a publisher, bookshop and gallery led by Chris Carrell originally established in Sunderland in 1969. A large number of books were published to accompany a dynamic live programme of poetry and art events and exhibitions. Books were made with artists including Bob Cobbing, Henry Chopin, Dom Sylvester Houéard, Robin Crozier and Ian Hamilton Finlay. In time the bookshop would become Sunderland Arts Centre and eventually the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art. The new Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art is planned to open at the National Glass Centre in February 2018, in a space where Foundation Press was previously based.

13. Throughout her career, Sister Corita Kent identified herself as an educator more than an artist, even as her message-based serigraphs became widely appreciated and accepted in the mainly male-dominated canon of Pop Art. Teaching art in the 1960s – principally to women at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles – she was famous for setting tasks which enforced vigorous productivity in order to reveal unexpected new angles. Rule No.1 of Corita’s ‘Rules and Hints for Students and Teachers’, created in 1965 with her class, reads ‘FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE’.

E. IN WHICH THE PRESS CONTEMPLATES WHETHER IT’S BEST TO DESCRIBE WHAT IT MAKES AS ‘ART’, ‘TOOLS FOR LEARNING’ OR SIMPLY ‘OTHER PEOPLE’S WORK’?

Foundation Press also makes things under its own name, it is a space for us to explore the duality between teaching and art-making. The Press has recently enjoyed designing briefs which operate as instructional artworks (they might also be described as ‘performative workshops’ or ‘print performances’) inspired by the teaching approaches of Corita Kent, Allan Kaprow, Fraser Muggeridge and Robin Page. We are intrigued by how a workshop might also be an artwork, but also how it might just be a good workshop. In addition the Press has dabbled with the idea of creating mainstream colouring books for adults, editioned wallpapers or its own magazine. Foundation Press enjoys the freedom of distraction and making things in any medium it chooses.

14. In 1972 the Italian singer Adriano Celantano had a number 1 hit in his home country with the impossibly long and unpronounceable pop song ‘Prisencolinensinainciusol.’ The song is meant to sound to its intended Italian audience like English spoken with an American accent, but the lyrics are pure gibberish (except for the words ‘all right’). Gibberish can be a device for talking in new ways.

F. IN WHICH THE PRESS CONSIDERS WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE IF WE ONLY HAD POTATOES TO PRINT WITH?

Risograph duplicators have the capability to make up to 120 prints per minute (ppm). Coloured layers can be built up quickly and intuitively, either digitally or manually using the scanner top like a photocopier. The Press has utilised the fast pace of this print method as a characteristic of our teaching and making. What does it mean to conceive of, fabricate (and perhaps deconstruct and recycle) something within one day or one hour? At what point of designing something do you start over-designing something? How can the parameters of time and medium energise unexpected creative possibilities?

15. The Great Automatic Grammatizator is a short story by Roald Dahl originally published in the anthology ‘Someone Like You’ (1952). It describes a machine which, through a carefully designed algorithm, can write a prize-winning novel in roughly fifteen minutes. Under the orders of a ruthless publishing firm, half the world’s fiction writers sell out – agreeing not to write anything again and have all future work penned by the machine under their names. Foundation Press hopes to be awkwardly human, but could also have signed its name away to the Great Automatic Grammatizator long ago...

G. IN WHICH THE PRESS REFLECTS UPON A TECHNICIAN’S REMARK THAT WE SHOULD PUT A SHREDDER AT THE END OF OUR PRINTER DESTROYING ALL THINGS WE MAKE, IN ORDER TO SAVE TIME.

We do not want to imply that we do not take care and pride in the things we produce; we would be hypocritical as artists and teachers if we didn’t approach printing and publishing with rigour. However we aren’t sure about the longevity and permanence of the things we create. We often think that it’s more about the process of how you make something rather than simply what you make. Maybe some of the things we print are like photographs of a live performance – they are all that’s left when it’s over, but can never sum up what actually happened.

16. Foundation Press was founded by Joe Woodhouse, Tom Madge and Adam Phillips in 2013. Currently it is led by Deborah Bower, Joe Woodhouse and Adam Phillips with the support of the students and facilities at the University of Sunderland, UK.

H. IN WHICH THE PRESS CONFUSES ITSELF BY ASKING: “IF A PRESS CAN BE A PRESS OUTSIDE OF THE PRESS? IF WE MOVED, WOULD WE STILL BE FOUNDATION PRESS? OR WOULD WE EVEN BE A PRESS? WHAT IS A PRESS?”

FP Titling’ is a typeface designed especially for Foundation Press by Birmingham-based designers An Endless Supply. The font imagines a full set of characters based upon the logo of the Riso Kagaku Corporation. The internet tells us that in Japanese the word ‘riso’ roughly translates as ‘ideal’ and ‘kagaku’ means ‘science’. Foundation Press is not an ideal science.

17. Foundation Press is also an imprint of West Academic – a publisher based in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA, specialising in textbooks ‘authored by renowned figures in academia’, focussing upon law and the US legal system. Foundation Press (Sunderland) often receives (via email) requests for Foundation Press (US) books from distributors and academics across the world. Several of these email requests implore us that, due to a lack of finances, these textbooks be provided free of charge. West Academic have a registered national trademark * on the name ‘Foundation Press’ in the United States of America. We assume – with our minimal legal understanding – that this does not affect our work in Sunderland.

18. The reverse of this text contains collages from a workshop deconstructing the FP Titling typeface using a photocopier, an A3 scanner, iPhone, inks and other items to hand in the riso studio. Whilst we made these collages we drank peppermint tea and discussed the content of this text. The text was written by Foundation Press in August 2017 with additional notes provided by Sean Kaye and Jo Frenken (and Wikipedia).

19. Foundation Press has a new website (www.foundationpress.org) which will be launched in September 2017. If you would like to get in touch with project ideas or questions please email: info@foundationpress.org