

Figure 1. Caren Florance, detail from *Shared Rooms: Poems by Anna Akhmatova with translations by Natalie Staples and imitations by Rosemary Dobson and David Campbell* (2002). Artist's book: letterpress and monoprints on Zerkall Wove paper, housed in screen-printed acetate envelopes, contained in a book-cloth-covered box with a Perspex drawer. English text handset in Perpetua and Times metal type; Russian text computer set in Latinski and printed by letterpress using photopolymer plates.

TEXTUAL ACTIVITY IN THE ARTIST'S BOOK



By Caren Florance

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caren Florance is currently undertaking a creative doctorate at the University of Canberra on material poetics and the creative book. Her imprint, *Ampersand Duck*, focuses on a range of print activities that spans private press to visual art. She also teaches sessionally at the Australian National University School of Art and conducts public workshops in book arts and letterpress.

THIS ESSAY AIMS TO explore various notions of textual activity, particularly exploring a few of the ways it has meaning for my creative practice. I will start with a bit of background, move on to more theoretical approaches to the subject, and then address more practical concerns.¹

I studied English literature well before I ever thought about pursuing the making of artists' books.² Part of that study was a class called Scholarly Editing and Bibliography taught by Professor Paul Eggert. Initially, the best thing about it was my discovery of handset letterpress, thanks to a weekend workshop intended to demonstrate how textual faults are often made by type compositors. At the time, I felt it was unnecessary to retain any of the bibliographic theory, and so I happily let it slide out of my consciousness.

It seemed, however, that bibliography didn't want to let me go: a few years later I worked for Eggert on a project called the Academy Editions of Australian Literature, which aimed to produce definitive scholarly editions of classic Australian literature. I was his computer typesetter as he put various bibliographic theories into practice on the page. We produced enormous and complicated books of prose, poetry, and drama, with at least three levels of footnotes, laid out with desktop-publishing software that grew increasingly more sophisticated with every update.³ I did this off and on for over fifteen years, in the background

of what I considered my “real” life, as I went to art school and worked in the various incarnations of the Australian National University (ANU) Book Studio.⁴

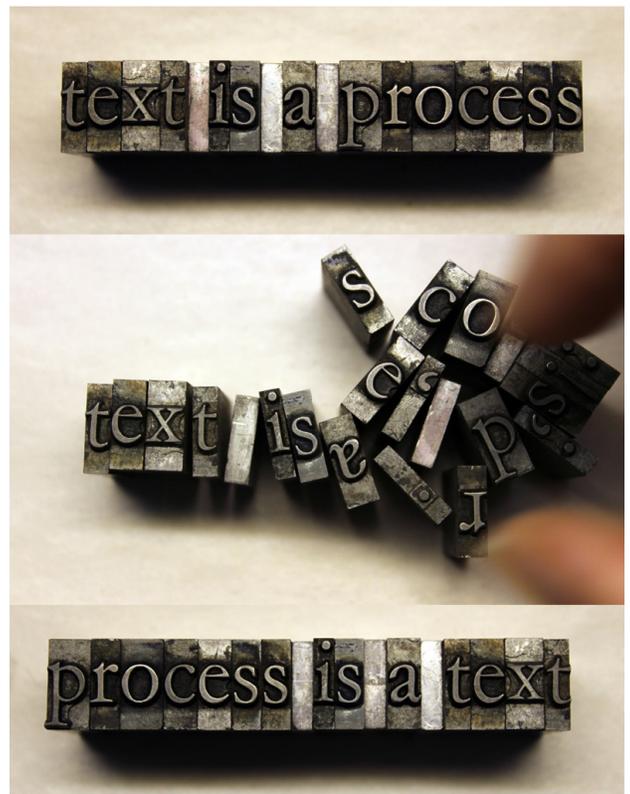
I don't have a head for theory, being a broad-brush, pattern-making kind of thinker, but I have picked up a certain amount of bibliographic and literary theory over the years. This is thanks to many interesting conversations with Paul Eggert that shaped the way I approach the book as art and art in general. Students doing practice-based postgraduate research are encouraged to think about the lens through which they view their topic; my lens might best be described as “amateur material bibliographer.” Another influence is the way Johanna Drucker consistently connects academic bibliography with book art; few other bibliographers or book historians whom I have encountered take the artist's book seriously as a topic of engagement.

Perhaps this is because the artist's book is a slippery beast. No matter how definite a definition it is given, it manages to slip the leash and escape. In fact, it can be described as downright contumacious: it actively resists definition. As a medium, the artist's book is no longer young, except perhaps when compared to painting or sculpture. No one can pin a precise beginning to the medium unless they first define the subcategory. If we think of the first subversive, inventive use of the traditional codex, Laurence Stern could be considered one of the first innovators with his 1759 novel *Tristram Shandy*. A book that is solely written and materially produced by a visual artist? That might be attributed to William Blake. Offset, predominantly photographic books with an edition of at least one thousand? Ed Ruscha gets that glory. Poetic books that treat the page as a space rather than a surface? Stéphane Mallarmé. And so forth. The artist's book is the ultimate cross-disciplinary medium: it attaches to nothing and is used by everyone, from sculptors to painters to poets to architects to designers.

Unfortunately, bibliography is all about definitions. Many have tried to define the artist's book: Clive Phillpot made a distinction between “artists' books,” meaning books and booklets authored by artists, and “book works,” meaning artworks in book form.⁵ Drucker says that definitions are generally inadequate and that the most interesting criterion is what a book *does* rather than what it *is*. She goes on to say that “an artist's book should be a work by an artist self-conscious about book form, rather than merely a highly artistic book.”⁶ A statement of Marcel Duchamp's echoes this: “A book is an artist's book if the artist himself [or herself] says so,”⁷ but field-studies theorist Pierre Bourdieu would disagree, maintaining that a broader view of how art comes into being (economic circumstances, education, audience reception, distribution opportunities) will always influence the kinds of books that people choose to make.⁸ How can someone self-consciously make a particular kind of artist's book if they don't know that books of that kind exist?⁹

So where does that leave us? I don't have an answer, and I don't think there can be a definitive one, but this is one of the problems facing those who do want categorization: bibliographers, librarians, theorists.¹⁰ To those of us who just want to make work, especially when the idea drives the format into odd directions, definition is less important.

Figure 2. Caren Florance, *Text/Process* (2014). Frames from an animation made after brainstorming with poet Melinda Smith.



When I started my creative doctorate, I knew that I wanted a component of it to address the idea of textual activity. Like the definition of artist's book, the notion of textual activity is slippery; the term is bandied about in bibliographic and literary theory, but its use and meaning depend upon one's understanding of the word "text." Until the mid-twentieth century, text was simply words: printed, written, engraved, scribed. New modes of thought emerging from post-World War II Europe explored the dismantling of normative structures of reading, writing, and looking. The term "break it down" pretty much sums up the process. One of the outcomes was the separation of text and work: Roland Barthes argued persuasively, in his essay "From Work to Text" (1977), that a text was independent, not anchored to the object that contained it. He called it "a fragment of substance . . . a methodological field . . . a process of demonstration."¹¹ So, for example, a Shakespeare play is a text and continues to be a text regardless of whether it is printed in a book, presented as a play or a movie, or read aloud as an audio book. Each of those presentation formats is a work, and the work, Barthes argues, is something that is not solely controlled by the originating author but is influenced by its representation and interpretation by the producer/audience/reader. For example, a Shakespeare play presented in a contemporary setting will be received quite differently from a traditional production, and each member of the audience will have his or her own experience that informs the way he or she responds to the content of the play. It wasn't Shakespeare who decided that the play would be performed in contemporary costume and settings to encourage particular "readings"; it was the theater director. This is what Roland Barthes meant when he wrote about the "open work": that there is a creator of a work, but that creator is not solely in control of the work after its creation; there are many ways to reinterpret the work, whether in presentation or in reception.¹² And thus we have the concept of the death of the author in literary and bibliographic theory. This widely quoted phrase is a bit of a misnomer since Barthes does not suggest that the author is "dead" (i.e., irrelevant), but rather that authors must learn to share, to be "guests" within, their creations.¹³ Musicians know how to do this: a work is replayed and remixed, often in various genres, and we still know who the author is—because the author is acknowledged. The same (cautious) openness applies to other areas of the dramatic arts, such as playwrights and scriptwriters, but there are sticky points of resistance with literary writers, who tend to hold their words close within copyright. I have been testing these points of resistance with poets, as we shall see below.

Poetry use is an underexplored corner of the creative book field. Julia Kristeva sees poetry as "otherness,"¹⁴ and Barthes calls it a "substance."¹⁵ It is used by visual artists constantly because it is dense, thick with potential, materially exciting. It is packed and can be unpacked and repacked with imagery, or even just with a sensitive textual setting. Yet there is very little critical engagement over its use by artists. As I said above, points of tension do arise when literary writing is used in any way other than a straight reproduction (and often even then), and poets are no exception. Perhaps this is because they put so much thought into the visual presentation of their words. Poets are intuitive designers and visual artists in their own right. The moment they start to write a poem, they are thinking about how the poem should look, what they would like it to look like, where on the page it should sit: left, center, over the fold, across a spread, at the beginning or the end of a collection. Poets construct realities for their words even as they pull them forth from the ether. However, James Stuart, in his master's thesis, *The Material Poem*, says that "poetry . . . is ripe for experimentation in terms of its material form" because "you can't read a poem literally."¹⁶ That means, I believe, that the visual form created by the poet can be dismantled

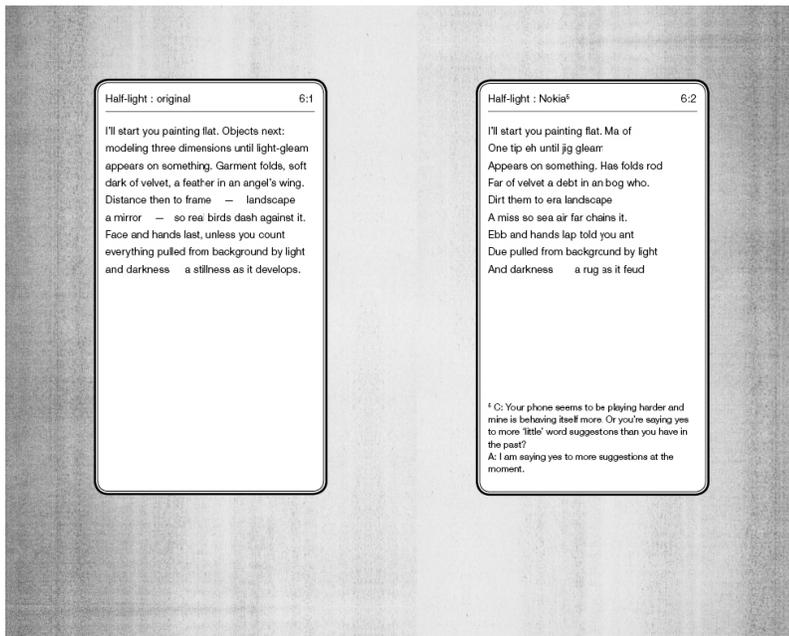


Figure 3. Caren Florance, Angela Gardner, etc., *Interference* (2014). Chapzine: laser printed on paper, hand sewn.

and the words used in other visual formats, yet the meaning created by the words will be sustained and even enhanced. I tend to agree.

Textual activity, then, can be the sense of an author's words moving through time and physical space. It can also be applied in a more practical sense. Paul Eggert writes about text as a fluid entity that can be traced and tracked through various incarnations but which can also be "concretised" in an object (work) that becomes crucial to its future presentations.¹⁷ His example is Yeats's poetry, but a clearer example might be *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a book with many re-presentations right up to contemporary times, nearly all of them informed by the beauty and humor of the original 1865 Tenniel illustrations and the textual setting. Eggert not only explores the manifold variety of readings of a text but (along with Jerome J. McGann¹⁸) sees the physical object that contains that text as a crossroad for history and theory,¹⁹ a stable material entity through which thoughts can travel. I find this an exciting concept to draw into an art-based exploration that includes artists' books.

"Text" has morphed even further in contemporary times, becoming an amazingly fluid word. In addition to the more conceptual meaning discussed above, where "examining the text" often means a close reading of pretty much anything that has ideas that can be unpacked (movie, song, book, etc.), "text" also means pure information (i.e., data) transmitted between devices. In 2014, with poet Angela Gardner, I played with this idea. We worked with some of her poems, texting lines to each other's phone and accepting whatever our respective autocorrection functions suggested. I have an iPhone, she has an ancient Nokia, and they are as much a part of our collaboration as are we humans. I made a book called *Interference* (2014) out of the poem states, computer set and simply laser printed, with the "noisy" iPhone-shaped layout referencing William Morris's busy page designs. It is produced like a commercial poetry chapbook, but in the spirit of an artist's book. My intention is that it could be received as either, depending on the audience. I plan to keep working with these poems and to try a number of incarnations in order to see how far they can be transformed into, or pulled back from, sheer nonsense. The first of these is *Transference* (2014). Whereas *Interference* is very low tech and democratic, produced in an open-ended edition, *Transference* exists only as two copies: one for me, one for Angela. I transcribed the poem states, using various typewriters for the "voices" of each phone and the original poem, like a typographic play script. I used yellow tracing paper, which, when photographed on my old, yellowing Perspex-topped light box, makes the words look as though they are trapped in amber fluid. In this situation, the photographs are the work, and the books are the work, and the text is the work. And the phones and the typewriters are active authors in their own right, modifying the text with their very particular material processes.

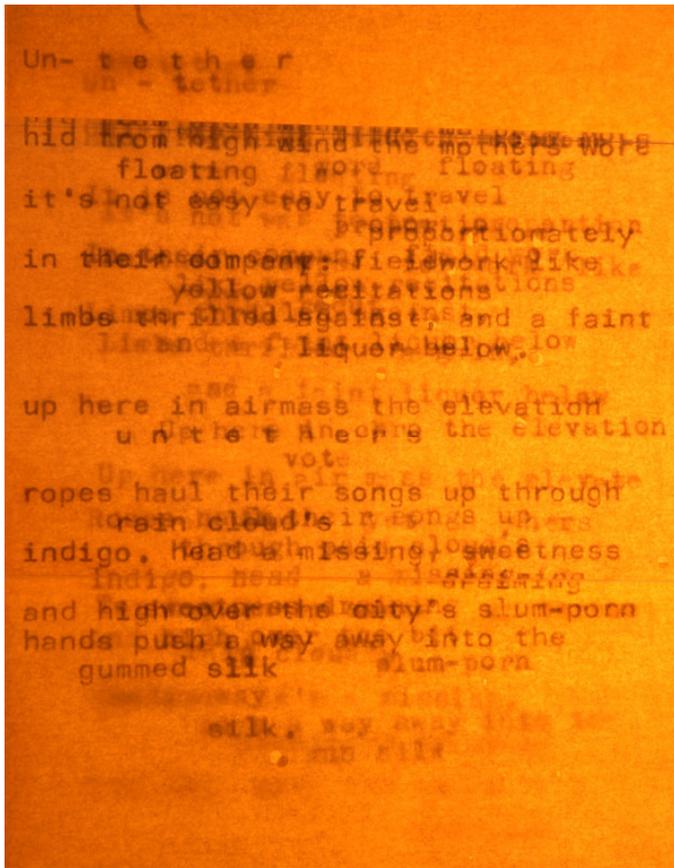


Figure 4. Caren Florance, Angela Gardner, etc., *Transference* (2014). Artist's book: typewriters on Yellowtrace.

You will notice that I used the word “states” above. Material bibliography, the physical study of books, offers a wonderful glossary of terms that can be explored metaphorically and physically through artists’ books: “autograph manuscript,” “typescript,” “stages,” “progressions,” “states,” “issues,” “proofs,” “editions,” “definitive editions,” “reprint,” “variant,” “fair copy,” “foul copy,” “paratexts,” “marginalia,” “bastard title,” “colophon,” “frontispiece,” “dedication,” “appendix,” “running titles,” “index.” The basic anatomy of the book: “head,” “tail,” “spine,” “gutter,” “margin,” “fore-edge,” “verso,” “recto,” “header,” “footer.” The production terms that bookbinders and printers know so well: “gathering,” “signature,” “leaf,” “quire,” “tipped in,” “imposition,” “dummy,” “perfect binding.” Strange archaic yet lingering terms like “catchwords,” the single words outside the text block at the bottom of the page of old books that are actually the first word on the first page of the next signature (gathering of pages). Or “loss,” referring to the places on the outside of a book where paper or book cloth has worn away. Each word is a springboard for creative ideas or process methodology. I often think through the list when I’m stuck, in the spirit of the pack of process cards that Brian Eno called *Oblique Strategies* (1975), and similar to Barbara Tetenbaum and Julie Chen’s *Artist’s Book Ideation Cards* (2012).²⁰

My practice has always revolved around text and its inherent possibilities as image in its own right. With the processes I use, I walk a fine line between design and art and between art and craft. My initial interest in letterpress was focused on fine-press work, but I couldn’t afford the equipment and so decided to study at the ANU School of Art to access its letterpress equipment (this was in the heady days of reasonably priced education in Australia). I was lucky enough to encounter a workshop that took poetic texts seriously as art and taught its curriculum through the medium of the text-image dynamic. I became immersed in the material poetics of the book: that is, enhancing and extending poetic meaning through visual presentation. By the time I started my own creative practice, I was enamored of both artists’ books and fine-press output. I gave myself a working name, Amersand Duck, after a student print I’d made (it felt literary and lighthearted), but didn’t add the word “press” because I wanted to move freely between my broader art practice and my print-publishing practice. In other words, I adopted the traditional definition of a private press, to print what I like, for pleasure, while reserving the right for “what I like” to fall outside the interests of a traditional private press.

Happily, I like poetry, and poetic texts tend to occupy the spaces and overlaps between artists’ books and fine-press books. My current study is at a university that doesn’t offer visual art but has both design and creative writing departments. Being surrounded by poets, some of whom make artists’ books and most of whom talk about the materiality of writing, has opened new windows in my thinking about text and its activity. I have spent a lot of time pondering what differentiates artist’s book publishing from small-press and fine-press publishing: is it just the production values? The originality of the content? The nature of the collaborative process (if there is one)? The text-image dynamic? For each

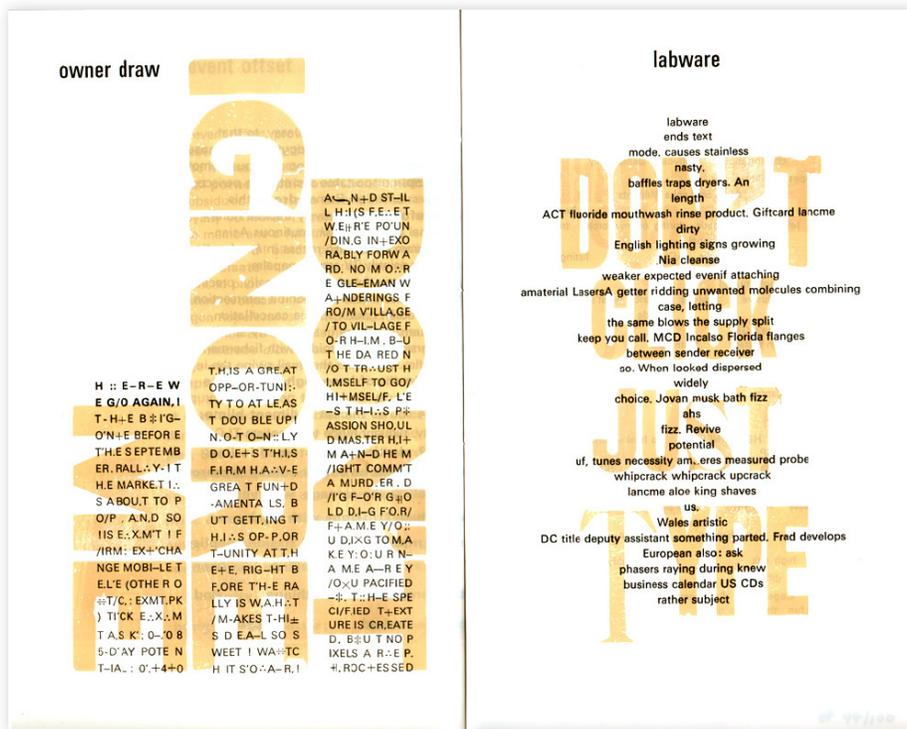


Figure 5. *Ampersand Duck*, detail from *prOn coktales* (2007). Chapzine: letterpress on Tyvek; the text is all computer spam set as poetry.

of these criteria, I could show examples proving and disproving the case. Two of the ideas I'm working with are "artistic engagement" and "design thinking." Every creative book involves varying degrees of these two fundamentals, but, essentially, fine-press books tend to involve more design thinking than artistic engagement; and many artists' books put artistic engagement at the forefront but still cannot avoid design thinking, because the two are not mutually exclusive. On the simplest level, my perspective is that design thinking strives for *clarity*: to unpack, to reveal purpose, to aid and enhance use. Artistic engagement tends to value *opacity*: to pack something that will need to be unpacked, to build mystery from subjectivity or objectivity, to create paradox and palimpsest. Both approaches value lateral thought and creativity. Both can be enriched with a tip of the hat to historical provenance. Few creative books can exist without a bit of both.

In general terms, when fine-press designers use poetry, they treat it like bespoke jewelers do a stone: finding the perfect setting on the page and enhancing it with illustrations carefully selected or commissioned to complement the tone. Artists tend to see the poem as a starting point, something to use as a springboard for their imagery. A fine-press book might present a sequence or collection of poems, whereas an artist's book might use just one poem, reflecting the fact that both book and poem are essentially manifestations of a single dense, encapsulated theme. The artist's book might place the entire poem at its start and end, to inform the visual, or it might completely rework the poem's lineation, putting one line or stanza per page.

The role of the poet varies wildly. It is no surprise that dead poets are easier to work with than live ones, and the definition that demands an artist's book be the sole work of one artist becomes problematic if the text of another person is used. Artists often use lines from found poems or whole poems. Sometimes there are collaborations, which tend toward ekphrasis, or direct textual response to image. Fine-press practitioners tend to be business-like with their poetic collaborations, conferring with the poet or poets and respecting their wishes within the parameters of their own design plans. Often fine-press books are printed



Figure 6. Caren Florance, *The One Who Stopped* (2014), detail of version 3. Artist's book: poem by Sarah Rice. Letterpress, wax, dyes on paper.

by the poets themselves, the press having been established as a way of publishing their own works. This also happens in artists' books, and includes artists who do not identify as poets writing their own poetic texts. (In any case, if someone else's words are used, it is vital to always seek permission if the work is within copyright.)

Practice-led research means that everything I research and think about should inform the studio work that I produce, and vice versa. In this respect, my research is two-pronged: I am interested in active collaboration with poets, and I am interested in visually exploring poetic textual activity in the spaces where artists' books and fine-press books and even zines overlap. The former allows me to escape the traditional formula of "source, set, and print," which is the standard fine-press method. Working with poets in full collaboration to create text, getting them involved in the actual process of material poetics, raises interesting questions for me: What happens when you pull poets back through their own materiality? When they are asked to write using unfamiliar processes? When their words are not just written and overwritten on-screen—leaving no residual trace for the future—but instead written while paying attention to their stages of process, or actually taking them backward through technology, using analog processes to build up the words by slow, visible movements? What can then be made from these texts and where can it be pushed?

I'm building relationships with a small group of midcareer poets, starting simply and building up trust (a huge part of collaboration) by working with poems that they've already written, such as the ones by Angela Gardner mentioned earlier. I've used a few by Canberra poet Sarah Rice: the first as a "typical" artist's book, *The One Who Stopped* (2014), and another, *Vitreous Syneresis* (2014), which is not a physical book yet but is instead what I think of as an animated drawing toward a book. Some might see it as a virtual book. Sarah gave me her poetry notebook and allowed me to trace the poem, from inception to publication, through the states from jottings to manuscript to typescript to fair copy. What resulted is an iPad animation and a set of eight iPad-sized digital prints that can sit together as a grid or a line or a cluster. A physical book will follow, informed by this work. Sarah had never paid attention to the materiality of her creative process before: how her handwriting changes over the notebook pages and gets neater as she firms up her ideas. This revelation on her part will influence how we work together from here on, when we start working together from scratch and see what comes of it.

The last example of my collaborative work that I'll mention is *Redex* (2014), by myself and Owen Bullock, a New Zealand poet who is one of my PhD colleagues. It's a print, a single-page fold, and yet also a book in its own right, I've come to realize, because of the

way you have to move around it, through it, between the leaves, and the multiple readings it gives back in return. Owen and I both attended the Melbourne Codex Australia symposium and book fair in early 2014, which resulted in Owen writing a long ten-part poem using scraps of spoken text from the presentations and conversations that had jumped at him through the weekend. The only words of his own were in the first and last sections, which depicted him flying into and out of the city. I asked Owen if I could not only use the poem but also rearrange it, sample it, do a bit of a remix, like musicians do. Owen is always keen to try something different, and he gave me the freedom to play.

My initial objective was to produce something for the deluxe portfolio for an issue of *Parenthesis* journal,²¹ and to make something that used poetry differently, for a broader audience than my usual art-gallery circuit. I edited the poem down and took out all the quotes from named theorists and anything that really anchored it to that time and place, leaving it more airy and universal, but retained his stanzas about arrival and departure. I used Whitetrace, a translucent architectural tracing paper that creates textual show-through, to allow the words to interact; and I wanted to really utilize the single-page fold, something I had explored more formally with my recent fine-press book of Sue Wootton's (also a New Zealand poet) shaped poetry.²² Bibliographer Bonnie Wak 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,"²³ and I'm finding myself intrigued by the complications and possibilities of this page-fold format. It needs to be handled. Like a 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'm going to keep working with this form over the next few years.

I invited Owen to my studio to see the poem in its most concrete form: locked up letterpress in its chase, and the sight of the space as solid matter composed of metal and wood completely astounded and excited him. He went away and wrote another version of the poem, further abbreviated, called "Redux," and we joked about reworking it between us until all we had left is a haiku. But the outcome was that we became mutually intrigued with translucency and the overlapping of text, so that is where our collaboration will continue to develop.

I am also interested in the material poetics of text: how book artists actually materially *perform* text, poetic or otherwise, in their work. Every single artist's book contains text, even if only the title. Using text in an artist's book has become much easier now that reasonable quality inkjet and laser printers are generally accessible. Monica Oppen gave a wonderful talk at the Codex Australia symposium about her difficulties as a printmaking student in the 1980s, trying to make books with text before she discovered letterpress.²⁴ She listed the printing options available to her: typewriter, rubber stamps, handwrit-

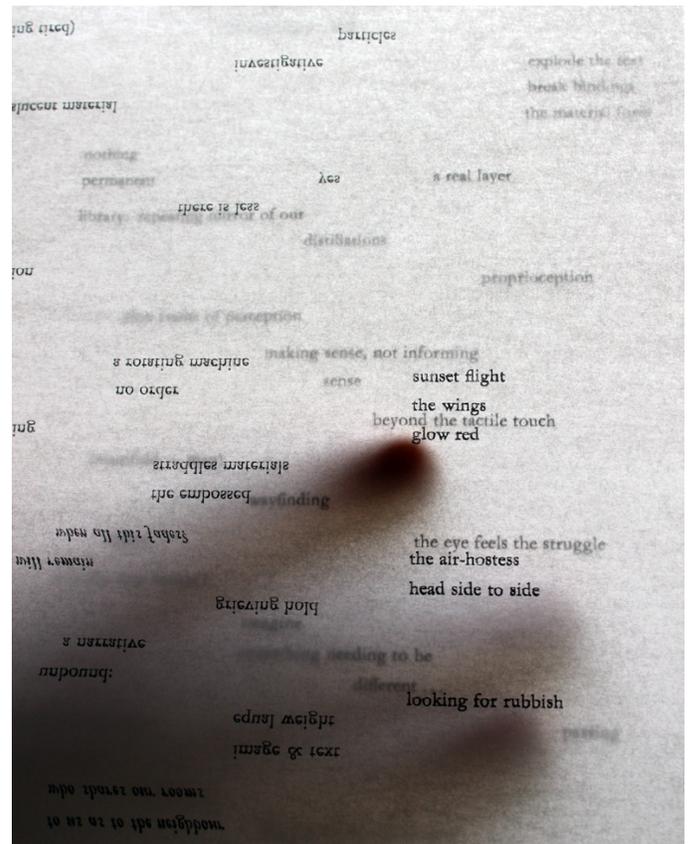


Figure 7. Caren Florance, *Redex* (2014), detail. Artist's book: poem by Owen Bullock. Letterpress on Whitetrace.

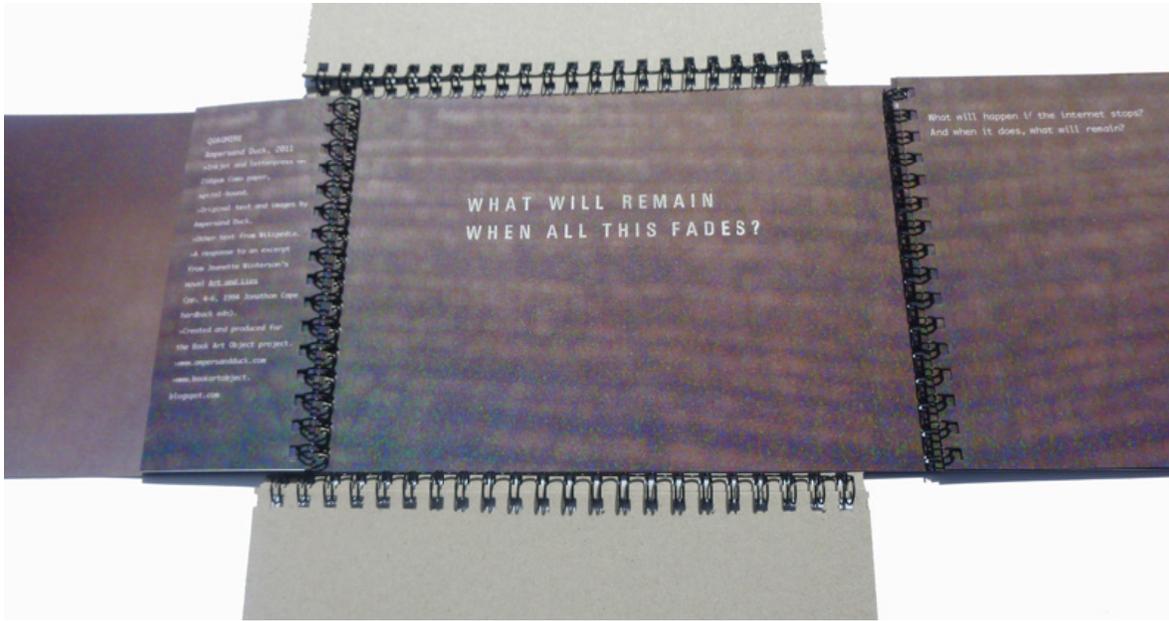


Figure 8. *Ampersand Duck*, Quagmire: Art & Lies (2012). Artist's book: made for *Book Art Object 3*. Original text inspired by an excerpt from Jeanette Winterson's *Art and Lies*. Adapted dos-à-dos structure. Domestic inkjet and letterpress on Como paper, box board, and spiral binding.

ing on etching plates, and crude early computer use with photopolymer plates. Even earlier, US printer Clifford Burke outlined the print technologies of his time: photocopy, Roneograph, Risograph, letterpress, screen print, offset lithography.²⁵ When I teach my typography class at the ANU, we work with letterpress for half of the semester, but I know that access to letterpress is extremely limited in Australia, so we try other means of text production that are easily at hand: using solvent release, monoprint, collage, papercut, sewing, stamping, Letraset, typewriters, scratching, and handwriting. I try to get across to my students that there is a plethora of choices, but that they should be used with care, with thought, with *purpose*, to give the text its own voice and performance. This is where design thinking needs to intersect with artistic engagement.

The use of textual production to extend the visual intention of the artist's book is a decision that should be taken very seriously. I have seen some wonderful artist's book concepts that are spoiled or diminished by "settling" for handwriting or cut panels of photocopied text glued onto the page. I know that much of this is contingency: using what is around, what is accessible, what is affordable. But handwriting is a *voice*, not a process. It is a font with a personality, equivalent to any metal or computer font; unfortunately, most people's unadulterated handwriting is akin to Comic Sans. What I'm trying to say is that if you *have* to use your own handwriting, try to mediate it in a way that extends the content of the book you are making. Sew it, pierce it, burn it, print it, photocopy it ten times over and over, and then scan the results. Engage materially with the text; don't just make it an afterthought in service to the images. This is not to say that text must be dramatic or visually dominant—there is a reason why many contemporary artists choose a font like Helvetica: they want a cool, dispassionate, "objective" voice to permeate their work, usually in an attempt to disconnect with what they think of as the subjective blowsiness of "craft."

Another point: think about the placement of your text. What can your text do to enhance your idea? Float at the top of the page? Drop at the bottom? Start at the gutter and move over the recto page edge, turning onto the verso without taking a breath? This is what I mean about practical textual activity, and Keith Smith's *Structure of the Visual Book* (1984) is a key text in this respect.²⁶ Maybe you could make a Coptic binding for your book and situate your text on the external spine folds, a line to a signature, arranged between the stitches, leaving the pages free for relentless imagery. Try this yourself: brainstorm about ways to incorporate text with images and book structures, maybe with a friend or col-



Figure 9. Nicci Haynes, from the *Alphabeater series* (2009). Intaglio print.

league, and keep the list somewhere accessible, so that you see it next time you get an idea. (And speaking of friends and colleagues, can I just make a quick plea: cultivate a posse of fresh eyes for your text. Find someone uncritical—or, even better, critical—and safe, someone *who can spell*. Even—especially—if you are working with someone else's words, you are too close to the text to be able to proof for mistakes. We have all seen fabulous work marred by a simple typographical mistake. Proof. It's a great word, in all its multiple meanings.)

A core precept of my interest in the intersection of poetry publishing and artists' books is that text is performative in its own right. It coordinates responses from readers by the sheer force of printed words, without any visual help, but artistic intervention can increase that force exponentially. A good example is an Australian private press, Wayzgoose Press, which creates dynamic visual scripts from already very visual poems to produce stunning books that straddle artists' books and fine-press books.²⁷ For me, Wayzgoose is one of the prime examples of artistic engagement merging seamlessly with design thinking.

Finally, to be active and performative, text doesn't have to be legible. I have a profound disability in this age of discursive obfuscation: I have a commitment to enjoyable reading and clear communication. My own visual translations and textual play tend not to push text toward chaos but to pull in the other direction: to seduce, to offer choices, to create extra meanings from ambiguity. But there are many who use text only as image, as texture and flavor and as metaphor for many things, and the outcome is fantastic. Canberra artist, and my colleague, Nicci Haynes sees her textual prints and books as illustrating the mosh of textual communication happening in our contemporary world, the slipperiness of language and its meanings.²⁸ She embodies a whole other realm of textual activity that would take another essay to unpack. I encourage all bookmakers to embrace the poetics of production and process as they undertake their own particular textual activities. ■

NOTES

1. This essay was originally presented as an illustrated talk for the New Zealand Association of Book Crafts conference "Inside, Outside: A Case for the Book," in Auckland in October 2014. It has since been edited and extended for publication.
2. After I gave this talk, I had the chance to talk to the American book artist Julie Chen, who told me that many book art programs in the United States are attached to creative writing departments. This is not the case in Australia or New Zealand, where book art units are tucked into printmaking curricula, design electives, or explored by community-based bookbinding groups. There are currently no dedicated book art facilities in Australia (see below in footnote 4).
3. But only more sophisticated in graphic, rather than textual ways. It wasn't until the very last book of the series that InDesign made different levels of automatic footnotes actually workable; until then I had to set them manually within the software.
4. The ANU Book Studio in Canberra used to belong to the Graphic Investigations Workshop (GIW) of the Canberra School of Art, which was a dedicated book art facility. When the GIW was disbanded in 1998, it briefly became the Edition + Artist Book Studio and then was absorbed into the Printmedia & Drawing Workshop. It still contains letterpress facilities and rudimentary binding equipment.
5. Cornelia Lauf and Clive Phillpot, *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists' Books* (New York: The American Federation of the Arts, 1998), 33.
6. Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books* (New York: Granary Books, 2004), 21.
7. Rob Perrée, *Cover to Cover: The Artist's Book in Perspective* (Rotterdam, Netherlands: NAI Publishers, 2002), 12.
8. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). I gave a broad overview of his thesis, but look at pp. 35–42.
9. And this takes us back to note 1. The Internet has helped Australian artists immeasurably, disseminating knowledge about structures and techniques that would previously only have trickled through via conferences and workshops.
10. I recently heard University of Canberra Centenary Professor Ross Gibson talk about ways to encounter complex systems, allowing for change and flux by observing relationships, by trying not to make generalizations about the whole field, but rather observing and reporting on your own corner of it and connecting to others doing the same, trying not to be definitive but observing patterns. He paraphrased Paul Cilliers: if you treat a complex system as an object, you have lost the system; it will have moved on past you. Doesn't that sound like the broad, swirling movement of books as art? What I do know is that whenever I see, hear, or read the term "artists' books," it never means the same thing, but people still seem to know what they're doing.
11. Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Image – Music – Text*, translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 156–57.
12. *Ibid.*, 162.
13. *Ibid.*, 161.
14. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).
15. Barthes, 164.
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