

# Letterpress 101

{ELEMENTAL PRINTING}

*Jaffe Atrium Book Arts Gallery*  
*Wimberly Library*

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY  
BOCA RATON SUMMER 2005

{LETTERPRESS 101 EXAMPLES:}

Leonard Baskin  
The Gehenna Press  
Northampton, Massachusetts  
*Cancelleresca Bastarda Displayed  
in a Series of Maxims and Mottos*  
Letterpress, edition of 100  
1965

Leonard Baskin  
The Gehenna Press  
Northampton, Massachusetts  
*Flosculi Sententiarum:  
Printer's Flowers Moralised*  
Harold McGrath, pressman  
Letterpress, edition of 250  
1967

Sebastian Carter  
Rampant Lions Press  
Cambridge, England  
*A Printer's Dozen: Eleven Spreads  
from Unrealised Books*  
Letterpress, edition of 200  
1993

Will Carter  
Rampant Lions Press  
Cambridge, England  
*The Book of Jonah*  
Letterpress, edition of 410  
1979

ORIGINAL BY DOUGLAS CLEVERDON,  
CLOVER HILL EDITIONS  
WOOD ENGRAVINGS FROM THE ORIGINAL  
BLOCKS BY DAVID JONES (1926)

Will Carter  
The Rampant Lions Press /  
The Two Horse Press  
London, England  
*Weeds and Wildflowers:  
Some Irreverent Words*  
by Armida Maria-Theresa Colt  
Wood engravings by George Mackley  
Letterpress, edition of 250  
1965

Barbara Cash  
Ives Street Press  
Sweden, Maine  
*American Samplers*  
Letterpress  
1993  
COURTESY CONVIVIO BOOKWORKS

Julie Chen  
Flying Fish Press  
Berkeley, California  
*Listening*  
Letterpress, edition of 75  
Box by Sandy Tilcock  
1992

Harry Duncan  
Abbattoir Editions /  
The Cummington Press  
Omaha, Nebraska  
*What Are Birds Worth*  
by Roger Weingarten  
Letterpress, edition of 230  
1975

The Hampshire House Workshops  
London, England  
*The Devil's Devices*  
by Douglas Pepler  
Woodcuts by Eric Gill  
Letterpress  
1915

Ronald King  
Circle Press Publications  
London, England  
*The Prologue to  
the Canterbury Tales*  
by Geoffrey Chaucer  
Letterpress, silkscreen  
Edition of 250  
1978

Giovanni Mardersteig  
Editiones Officinae Bodoni  
Verona, Italy  
*The Holy Gospels*  
Woodcuts by Bruno Bamanti after  
originals by Bartolomeo di Giovanni  
Letterpress, edition of 320  
1962

{CUTTING EDGE LETTERPRESS:}

Meg Belichik  
Brooklyn, New York  
**Miss Gowanus**  
Letterpress, mixed media  
Edition of 100  
1996

Printed on latex sheets, bound in a pliable lead cover... Could there be a better way to make a book about a polluted canal? The unusual materials make for a reading experience that is far from pleasant.

Inge Bruggeman  
Ink-A! Press  
Portland, Oregon  
**Bad News** by Lynn Tillman  
Letterpress, edition of 37  
1993

Bold typography: paragraphs read across the spine of the book, creating wide, yet extremely legible, blocks of text.

Walter Hamady  
The Perishable Press Limited  
Madison, Wisconsin  
**Depression Dog** by Toby Olson  
Letterpress, edition of 109  
Bound by Scott Kellar  
2003

Multiple type styles, “illustrations” created from type, margins oddly proportioned or non-existent... Easy enough to do with a computer, but this is set by hand using metal type.

Coriander Riesboard  
The Skeptical Press  
El Cerrito, California  
**Defensive Book**  
Letterpress, mixed media on handmade paper  
Edition of 15  
1993

Straight pins embedded in the handmade paper help to drive the point home in this book of warnings. It is practically impossible to read this book without being stuck by a pin. Like trying to hold a porcupine.

Coriander Riesboard  
The Skeptical Press  
El Cerrito, California  
**Ghost Book**  
Letterpress, edition of 15  
1993

Rather than print from type, Riesboard here prints from plates made from her own handwriting. The book is printed on extremely thin Japanese tissue, in an ink that borders on transparent.

## {PRINTING HISTORY:}

### GIAMBATTISTA BODONI (1740 – 1813)

Edizioni Valdonega

Verona, Italy

*Facsimile of Giambattista Bodoni's Cimelio*

Lithography

1990

Bodoni printed *Il Cimelio* in 1811. Bodoni's work is in the Neo-Classical tradition: a picture of order. The typeface used in this book is one the printer designed himself. Notice the letter shapes: narrow, rigid form, with level serifs: all very Neo-Classical qualities.

### EARLY BOOKS

Gratiofum Perchacinum

Venice, Italy

*Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*

by Guilelmo Durando

Letterpress on handmade paper, bound in vellum

1568

The Jaffe Collection's oldest book is still not old enough to be considered *incunabula*—a term reserved for books printed from movable type before 1501.

### ERIC GILL (1882 – 1940)

Hague & Gill

High Wycombe, England

*A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*

by Laurence Sterne

Etchings by Denis Tegetmeier

Letterpress, intaglio

1936

Eric Gill was an eccentric British monk who also happened to be one of the 20th Century's best designers and graphic artists. This book was designed by Gill, as was the typeface, Perpetua.

### JOHANNES GUTENBERG (c.1400 – 1468)

Pageant Books

Paterson, New Jersey & New York City

*Facsimile of Johannes Gutenberg's Biblia Sacra*

Lithography, gravure

Edition of 1000

1961

Johannes Gutenberg printed his 42-Line Bible around 1450 in Mainz, Germany. Before Gutenberg perfected the process of printing from movable type, books were copied by hand by scribes—a laborious process. If Gutenberg's book looks like it was written by a scribe, that's because it was designed to look like the hand-copied books that came before it; letterforms developed further as printing technology spread across Europe. As the new technology spread, the exchange of ideas was forever altered.

## {LETTERPRESS TECHNIQUE:}

### MAKE READY

Mike Hudson & Jadwiga Jarvis

The Wayzgoose Press

Katoomba, Australia

*Private Impressions 6: "Revolution"* by Jadwiga Jarvis

Letterpress, edition of 60

2000

The real "art" in printing comes in the details: proper letterspacing, placement on the page, and *make ready*, which refers to the process of building up the printing surface so that the proper amount of pressure is applied by the press. The result: solid blacks, clean lines, no lost areas, no overinked areas. Jarvis discusses proper make ready in this *Private Impressions* article. The book on display next to it, *Weeds and Wildflowers*, features an example of an excellent wood engraving printed by a man who knew all about make ready.

### TYPOGRAPHY

American Type Founders Company

Jersey City, New Jersey

*Specimen Book and Catalogue*

1923

Letterpress ruled the printing industry from the time of Gutenberg up until the mid-20th Century, when offset printing became the industrial standard. When letterpress was big business, so was type, and the American Type Founders company was the biggest. Printers and designers would order metal type from ATF through a catalog like this one.

### TYPOGRAPHY

Type Foundry H. Berthold AG.

Berlin, Germany

*Catalogue of Hebrew and Jewish Types*

1924

Type was cast in most every language. And the specimen catalogs were often some of the most beautiful books to be found. Metal type is still made today by a handful of casters, but it's nothing like the industry it was when companies like Berthold operated numerous plants throughout Germany. Typesetting today has become very much like letterpress printing today: a craft practiced by individuals and very small companies interested in handwork and high quality.

ASSORTED TOOLS AND TYPE ON DISPLAY ARE FROM THE FLEDGLING FAU BOOK

ARTS CENTER AND THE LETTERPRESS STUDIOS OF CONVIVIO BOOKWORKS IN

LAKE WORTH, FLORIDA. {[www.conviviobookworks.com](http://www.conviviobookworks.com)}

Robin Price  
Robin Price, Printer & Publisher  
Middletown, Connecticut  
*Language of Her Body*  
by Amy Bloom  
Photography by Derek Dudek  
Sumi-e by Keiji Shinohara  
Bound by Claudia Cohen &  
Mark Tomlinson  
Letterpress, mixed media  
Edition of 60  
2003

Silver Buckle Press  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Libraries  
Madison, Wisconsin  
*Exquisite Horse: A Printers' Corpse*  
Letterpress, mixed media  
Edition of 100  
1997

The Whittington Press  
Herefordshire, England  
*Matrix 1* (REPRINT)  
John & Rosalind Randle, editors  
Letterpress, edition of 450  
1981 (ORIGINAL PUBLICATION)

The Whittington Press  
Herefordshire, England  
*Matrix 12*  
John & Rosalind Randle, editors  
Letterpress, edition of 925  
1992

The Whittington Press  
Herefordshire, England  
*Matrix 23*  
John & Rosalind Randle, editors  
Letterpress, edition of 800  
2003

The Whittington Press  
Herefordshire, England  
*Matrix 24*  
John & Rosalind Randle, editors  
Letterpress, edition of 800  
2004

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EXHIBIT DESIGN: JOHN CUTRONE AND SETH THOMPSON  
CATALOG DESIGN: JOHN CUTRONE

NEXT AT THE JAFFE ATRIUM BOOK ARTS GALLERY:  
A FIELD OF OWLS  
OPENS SEPTEMBER 6, 2005

The logo for Florida Atlantic University (FAU) features the letters 'FAU' in a large, blue, serif font. The letter 'A' is stylized with a circular element that loops around it. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is located at the bottom right of the 'U'.

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Florida Atlantic University

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