2016/17 LETTERPRESS ANNUAL REPORT
Alex McKenzie and Elysia Mann

- Shop Use
- Special Projects / Improvements
- Type
- Presses
- Equipment
- Budget

SHOP USE

During the 2016-2017 academic year Letterpress open studio hours were held on Mondays from 4-8pm, Tuesdays from 4-8pm, and Wednesdays from 4-9pm in the fall and Mondays 3:30-7pm, Wednesdays 3:30-9pm, and Thursdays 12-3pm in the spring. Our total attendance for the school year was 151 visitors. This number accounts for students and faculty who chose to utilize the sign-in sheets at the front door and does not include the advance and intermediate students who were given permission to use the letterpress shop outside of open studio hours.

Shop demonstrations were offered to classes and organizations outside of open studio hours.

- October 31st – UT College of Law (Posters for the APIEL conference)
- September 6th – Polish Exchange Students (Sofia Palma and Aleksandra Czudak)
- September 26th – English Department (Jennifer Spirko)
- October 28th – Intermediate Print (Beauvais Lyons)
- October 31st – Intermediate Print (Beauvais Lyons)
- November 22nd – English Department (Students from ENGL 411)
- January 18th – Art History (Mary Campbell)
- January – 31st – English Department (Grist: A Journal of the Literary Arts)
- February 6th – English Department (Jessi Grieser)
- April 12th – Art 102 Instructors (Promotional materials for 102 Performance Night)
- March 20th – Tatiana Potts’ Relief 265 Class

During the course of the year we successfully promoted the Letterpress studio with posters and digital marketing. Visitors came from a variety of disciplines such as Graphic Design, Printmaking, 4D, Photography, Architecture, Sculpture, Law, Advertising, Interior Design, as well and English. Multiple students also visited to learn how to design and print their own wedding invitations, business cards, and small books. They were assisted with typesetting, wood block, and polymer plate production and printing, as well as multiple color registration.
After receiving demonstration, Tatiana Pott’s students came in to create a small edition book that utilized both set type as well as linoleum block printing. They were instructed on the specifics of page registration and formatting for book layout. They also received assistance with logistical and technical concerns regarding the project.

Dr. Mary Campbell also came for assistance in printing promotional posters for her second study abroad class in Paris. She received assistance with design layout and production printing for over 150 posters.

In the spring, Josh Shorey received assistance in printing materials for his thesis exhibition *Unknowing Wild* at the Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture.

Elysia Mann worked closely with the designers of Grist Journal to aid in design elements for the tenth issue. Special edition prints were made of specific works within the journal.

We also worked closely with ART102 instructors within the foundations department to aid them in the creation of marketing materials for Performance Night this spring.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS / IMPROVEMENTS**

We focused on reorganizing the archival materials in the letterpress studio, including examples of projects completed in years past. During this process of sorting through boxes and drawers that have been left in the studio, we came upon a complete collection of the works of Mo Lebowitz of the Antique Press. We immediately recognized the historical importance of this vast collection of ephemera including exhibition announcements, educational posters, lecture invitations, and other small advertisements. The complete collection—one of only a few in the country—was transferred to the University of Tennessee’s Special Collections where it will undergo a long process of preservation and cataloguing.

Other organizational incentives included the removal of unnecessary supplies and materials left by visitors in the past, many of which appear to have been tucked into every nook and cranny of the shop. This, along with the condensation of redundant locations for day-to-day tools and materials has freed up additional surface areas for students to utilize as they are working on projects in a studio where workspace is always at a premium.

**TYPE**

We have a large collection of the following lead typefaces: Bodoni, Universe, Cheltenham, Craw Clarendon, Wedding Text, Romany, Spartan, Bodoni, Stymie, Bernhard, Franklin Gothic, Nubian, Gothic Condensed and more. Wood type styles
range from antiques to gothics, with various weights of gothic faces making up the majority. Several type cases were resorted along with line spacing and thin copper and brass spacing for ease of use. The shop contains a wide selection of random image plates, dingbats, rules, cuts, and mechanical photo-image plates that visitors can add to their compositions.

In an effort to aid in the layout of the shop we reorganized and consolidated the various locations of wooden furniture.

Many ornamental border systems and dingbats previously tucked away in unlabeled drawers have been put out on display to help students incorporate them more readily. Weighted bar rules in lead and brass have also been organized by size for students to access.

PRESSES

The Vandercook SP-15 continues to be the workhorse of the shop. At the beginning of the year we noticed that the press was not level and made arrangements to rellevel the base so that press did not rock as the carriage moved up and down the press bed. There are still issues with the automatic inking system on the Challenge press however it still functions for smaller runs in which hand inking can serve as an appropriate application method. The smaller platen presses received minimal use this semester but are still in good working condition.

EQUIPMENT

The studio continues to use rubber based inks as well as a small selection of oil based inks. The shop has tools for cutting leading and a miter cutter. While the current paper cutter is sharp and functions decently well the guard and measurement bar are not entirely accurate and could be replaced.

In an effort to address the trip hazards in the shop we have relocated rubber mats and larger tables. This has greatly neutralized any tripping issues however it would be beneficial if the central floor outlet in the room could be removed.

BUDGET

All expenses for equipment maintenance, paper, inks and solvents are provided through the printmaking lab fees. One-time expenses for the Grist cover wraps and broadside printing were billed to the English Department through Hannah. As more students in Foundations and Design use the facilities, it would be sustainable to have additional commitments of funds, especially in light of some of the equipment needs addressed above.
Examples of our work with Grist: A Journal of the Literary Arts, as displayed in Washington D.C. at the annual AWP conference, February 2017 (Grist staff editor, Jeremy Reed pictured).
Examples of our work with the ART102 Instructors for Performance Night, April 2017.