Shop Use

This academic year Letterpress open studio hours were held on Mondays from 3 – 6pm, Tuesdays from 10am to 4pm and Wednesdays from 9 am to 1 pm. Our total attendance for the school year was 378 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 offered to classes outside of open studio hours include:

- September 6: Beauvais Lyons’ Print and Social Practice class
- September 9: Beauvais Lyons’ Print and Social Practice class
- October 9: Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud’s Gender Studies Class (WGS)
- October 16: Emily Biven’s Art 503 Graduate Art class
- November 5: Emmett Merrill and Ashlee May’s Foundations Art 101 class
- December 5: Ashlee May’s Foundations 103 Class
- February 6: Kristina Key’s Foundation Art 103 Class
- February 26: Marla Sweitzer’s Art 103 Class
- March 12: Hilary Haven’s English 411 Class (three separate demos were performed on this day due to the large class size)
- April 1: Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud’s English 414 Class
- April 10: Emmett Merrill and Rachel Sevier’s Foundation 103 Class

This year we successfully promoted the Letterpress Studio with posters and takeaways. Visitors came from a variety of disciplines such as Graphic Design, English, Psychology, Computer
Sciences, 4D, Foundations, Photography, Architecture, Math, Restaurant Chain Management, History, and School of Art Graduate Students. Multiple students visited the shop independently to learn how to make their own posters, business cards, and wedding invitations. They were assisted with typesetting, printing, multiple color registration, book making, and basic design.

Both Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud and Hilary Havens assigned their English students to make use of the letterpress shop in the Fall and Spring semesters.

In the Fall, Professor Beauvais Lyons used the letterpress shop for his Prints and Social Practice class to promote the idea of the multiple in interaction with the campus and greater Knoxville community.

Over 60 students in Foundations 101 and 103 classes made use of the letterpress shop for both assigned and independent art projects in both semesters. Some of these projects resulted in printed and hand bound books utilizing both text and hand carved linoleum blocks.

In the Spring, Bryan Baker’s ARTA 291 bookmaking class used the letterpress shop on an almost daily basis in the creation of their book projects. They printed hand carved blocks as well as text on handmade paper.

While we are excited to see the shop use increase over the last two years, steps must be taken to help students understand the importance of correctly sorting their type, furniture and spacing. It is difficult to police students on correct sorting when the shop is full. In the past we have had issues with students waiting too long to complete their assignments and end up having to stay a few hours past the open studio hours. While this still happens occasionally, this bottlenecking has decreased since professors began staggering their student’s due dates. We encourage this practice to continue in the future.

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. We also have a full set of large wood type that appears to have been unnoticed and unused until now.

The Hellbox of type still sits full of unsorted and abandoned typefaces, but Bryan Baker designed a sorting system for lost type so that in the Fall semester is may slowly but easily be returned to its original drawers. This system involves sorting the abandoned type into galley trays by point size and then returning the type to their correct cases. This should be an on-going practice for technicians on slow days in the shop.

During Spring clean-up day, thanks to the aid of foundations students, we were able to re-sort a majority of abandoned galley trays. We also encourage foundations clean-up to annually have
students assist in letterpress as well as 137 and 443. The impact is extremely beneficial for the order of the letterpress shop.

In the future, we encourage professors and students to NOT USE VEGETABLE OIL as a means for cleaning type or the press. The oil dries and glues the type together, causing damage to the letters when students tend to throw them against the table to break them apart. The oil also gunks up the press bed and track. We should use a solvent based press wash or lithotine.

**Presses**

This year we made steps to repair the Challenge press and return it to working order. We pulled the chains out and cleaned them with brushes and mineral spirits, allowing the press bed to move again. We also raised the press its self and set it on abandoned furniture, as its legs had begun to sink into the rubber mat. Over the summer, we should replace the furniture with larger 2 x 4 boards. Our goal is to return the Challenge press to working order with the help of Bryan Baker.

The Vandercook is working well but could use a good deep clean over the summer, especially on the bed its self and the tracks.

**Equipment**

The studio continues to used rubber-based inks as well as a small selection of oil based inks. The shop has tools for cutting leading and a miter cutter, and continues to hold a floor unity corner-rounder that is not in working order. The cutting mats and paper cutter are a benefit to the shop.

The far-right type case is in need of repair. We removed the type drawers from it because the case was beginning to cave in. We put the drawers of type in a new case, replacing empty drawers that we put upside down in the broken case. This may be an easy fix, but until then, I feel that this switch makes the type more accessible in a working case. We might also look for a used type case to replace this current one.

We removed one of the furniture cases as having three cases of furniture was excessive for the traffic we have in the shop. We also believe that having a third furniture case promoted poor furniture sorting (too many open spaces to hide extra furniture).

The wood spacing has been resorted and any extras, or strange sizes have been gathered and prepared to cut down at Striped Light in August.

**Budget**

All expenses of equipment maintenance, paper, inks and solvents are provided through printmaking lab fees and partially through the foundations program. This year we spent
approximately $478.54 on paper over two paper orders throughout the year. The paper stock we have now should last us through the Fall 2019 semester. As most foundation classes have mandatory use of the letterpress shop, we believe it would be beneficial to have some foundations students help clean the shop on end of semester cleaning day. They were a huge help to us this year and I hope foundations can continue to send a few students to help out at the end of every semester. In addition, each student is allowed 10 sheets of French Paper paid for by the print department so we believe this assistance is a fair trade. Given steady use of the shop by students from the English Department, a request for transfer of funds annually would be appropriate.