THE PRINTED WEIRD

OCT. 12-14, 2023   RANSOM CENTER   U. TEXAS, AUSTIN
The American Printing History Association (APHA) welcomes you to our 48th annual conference, “The Printed Weird: Book History from the Margins,” at the Harry Ransom Center of the University of Texas at Austin.

“The Printed Weird,” APHA’s first hybrid conference, draws its theme from the long-standing and much-debated local culture rallying cry to “Keep Austin Weird.” The conference raises questions about established printing and book historical practices, knowledge, and objects, particularly those that present the odd or alternative, the apparently exceptional or idiosyncratic, the out of the mainstream, and contradictory to received wisdom.

Thursday, October 12

10:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.  Pre-Conference Tours of Local Art Centers, Libraries and Cultural Institutions (see conference webpage for details)

Benson Latin American Collection
Blanton Museum of Art
Dolph Briscoe Center for American History
Harry Ransom Center, “The Long Lives of Very Old Books” exhibition
Rob Roy Kelly American Wood Type Collection

4:00–6:00 p.m.  Registration

6:00–7:15 p.m.  Opening Speaker
Sarah Horowitz, Ink and Imagination: Unearthing Unconventional Printing Techniques for Baba Yaga

7:15–8:30 p.m.  Opening Reception
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13

9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Registration

9:30–9:45 a.m. Welcome

9:45–11:00 a.m. Papers Session 1
Molly E. Dotson, Creeps, Bleeds, and Other Oddities around the Edges
Paul Gehl, Curator of Junk Mail
M. Wright, ‘Peculiarly Suited’: When Typesetting Became Women’s Work

11:00–11:15 a.m. Break

11:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Papers Session 2
Craig Eliason, A Forgotten Purpose: Auriol as a Text Typeface
Jamie Mahoney, Revitalizing Werkman: Maverick Designer and Printmaker
Yasmin Rodriguez, LEGO Print Lab

12:30–1:45 p.m. Lunch Break

1:45–3:00 p.m. Panel 1
Cait Coker, Lori Newcomb, Elias Petrou and Todd Samuelson,
Invisible Evidence

3:00–3:15 p.m. Break

3:15–4:30 p.m. Papers Session 3
Levi Sherman, Ojalá: Material and Moral Cheapness on the US-Mexico Border
Saturday, October 14

9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Registration

9:30–9:45 a.m. Announcements/Housekeeping

9:45–11:00 a.m. Papers Session 4
Szilvia Szmuk-Tanenbaum, Unconventional Characters: The Use of Printers’ Ornaments in 18th-Century Spanish Plays
Zanna Van Loon, Leaving the Wrong Impression?: An Intriguing Copy of Aldus Manutius’ Orthographiae ratio (1564) Published by Christophe Plantin
Ring Yong, Looking at Chinese Woodblocks: A Revised Account of the Technology, Its Imprints, and Production Costs

11:00–11:15 a.m. Break

11:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Panel 2
Christine Adame, Meredith Cawley, Billi London-Gray, and Hannah March Sanders, Altered Books to Zines: Making Worlds

12:30–2:00 p.m. Lunch Break

2:00–3:00 p.m. Papers Session 5
Michael Laird, Bibliopegic Malfeasance; or: An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain 19th-century American Bookbinders’ Tickets
D Ryan Lynch, Influencers: Cordelistas as Political Actors in 20th and 21st Century Brazil

3:00–3:15 p.m. Break

3:15–4:30 p.m. Closing Speaker
Michael Winship, Walt Whitman Makes Weird: Producing the 1855 First Edition of Leaves of Grass

4:30–5:00 p.m. Closing Remarks
**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

**Sarah Horowitz**  
*Ink and Imagination: Unearthing Unconventional Printing Techniques for Baba Yaga*

Creating a conversation between the text and image is at the core of my artist book process. Each decision, from paper choice and typeface to typography, image composition, and printing contributes to developing this dialog where neither text nor image are subservient to the other but contribute equally. In my talk, I will share the evolution from my childhood-inspired concept to the final result, developed over nearly two years. From researching *Baba Yaga*s stories to mastering image-based storytelling and the intricacies of my unorthodox and weird approach to printing etchings, the journey of making *Baba Yaga* became deeply personal.

Sarah Horowitz, book artist and printmaker, lives at the base of the eastern Cascade Mountains in Leavenworth, Washington. More information about Sarah’s printmaking, artists’ books, special projects and imprint can be found at sarahhorowitzartist.com.

**Michael Winship**  
*Walt Whitman Makes Weird: Producing the 1855 First Edition of Leaves of Grass*

When Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* first appeared in July 1855, the world took notice. Ralph Waldo Emerson thought the work “the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed” as he greeted Whitman “at the beginning of a great career.” But it is not just the text of this innovative work that deserves our attention: the physical book itself is unlike any other volume of poetry of its day. Drawing on research new and old, this paper will explore the book’s production and just what makes it weird.

Michael Winship is the Iris Howard Regents Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a bibliographer and historian of the book, with special expertise in publishing and book trade history in the United States before 1940.
Panelists and Paper Presenters

Christine Adame, Meredith Cawley, Billi London-Gray & Hannah March Sanders
PANEL: Altered Books to Zines: Making Worlds

The accessibility of self-publishing technology in contemporary life means art books and print ephemera can express infinite individual subjectivities, without censorship from the status quo. This panel is about the world-building that emerges from making books and print ephemera by hand. Repurposing “trash” into book materials builds one-of-a-kind playgrounds for creative exploration, hones practices of attention, and enables the democratic spread of information. With these various forms of making, panelists will present self-publishing methodologies that create foundations for the singular, complex, and oddball narratives we all want to share.

Christine Adame is an intermedia artist and Assistant Professor of Foundations and Graphic Design at Texas Woman’s University.

Meredith Cawley currently teaches foundations classes in the College of Visual Arts and Design at the University of North Texas.

Billi London-Gray, Visiting Assistant Professor in Foundations, University of Wyoming, is an intermedia artist who examines how we succeed and fail at living out ideals of equality.

Hannah March Sanders is currently Area Head of Printmaking & Fibers and an Associate Professor at Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Cait Coker, Lori Newcomb, Elias Petrou & Todd Samuelson
PANEL: Invisible Evidence

Our present understanding of historical practices of book production and use is enriched by attentive analysis of seemingly insignificant details that have been discounted as oddities and outliers in the past. This panel will present case studies of the kinds of information that can be gleaned from close examination of early books, as we learn to more fully see the materiality of book-making in historical pasts and in the digital era. Papers will examine the ecosystems of manuscript re-use in early
modern book bindings; a 15th-century Greek verse that casts type-making in a pseudo-Homeric epic light; and a 17th-century English gentlewoman book owner who is now being revalued as an active collector.

**Cait Coker** is Associate Professor and Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Lori Humphrey Newcomb** is Associate Professor of English literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Elias Petrou** is Assistant Professor and Librarian of Classical, Medieval, and Modern Greek Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

**Todd Samuelson** is Associate Dean for Special Collections at the University of Utah’s J. Willard Marriott Library.

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**Jeremy Dibbell**  
*San Serrifean Easter Eggs in the Printing of Henry Morris and the Bird & Bull Press*

Henry Morris of the Bird & Bull Press was inspired by the 1977 April Fool’s Day *Guardian* insert on the fictional typographical archipelago of San Serriffe to print a series of books and ephemera building on the hoax. But Morris also included a number of “San Serrifean Easter Eggs” in various of his other publications unrelated to the archipelago. This talk will explore these little-noticed but amusing typographical asides, which provide a fascinating insight into the mind of Morris, one of the most idiosyncratic fine press printers of the late twentieth century.

**Jeremy Dibbell** is a Special Collections Librarian at Binghamton University.

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**Molly E. Dotson**  
*Creeps, Bleeds, and Other Oddities around the Edges*

This paper delves into the printed weird lurking around the outermost edges of a book’s pages—namely, page creep and page bleed. Bibliographic oddities if only in name, creeps and bleeds (and their dread-inducing
corporeal metaphors) become points of departure to better understand the book from the outside in. With examples drawn primarily from contemporary book art, this paper explores creative use of the extremities of the printed page.

Molly E. Dotson is the Graphic Arts Librarian at Princeton University.

Craig Eliason
*A Forgotten Purpose: Auriol as a Text Typeface*

Convention holds that while “display types” have no limit on their inventiveness, “text types” must be stylistically conservative. The Auriol types challenged this presumption. These early twentieth-century types from the Parisian Peignot foundry have long been thought of as Art-Nouveau fantasies intended for display applications, but they were also cast and promoted as text types. Examining some books set in Auriol allows us to assess the foundry’s venture of a new kind of text type.

Craig Eliason is a Professor of Art History at the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Paul F. Gehl
*Curator of Junk Mail*

Over my 30-odd years of institutional collecting on printing history for the Newberry Library, my colleagues began to refer to me as the Curator of Junk Mail. In fact, all three of my predecessors had also squirreled away contemporary and historical material of the sort. In this talk, I would like to exemplify 103 years of collecting ephemera at my institution and reflect on what it tells us about the history of printing that we cannot learn from other sources, and, more importantly, what it tells us about the history of history-of-printing collecting.

Paul Gehl, Curator Emeritus at the Newberry Library in Chicago, served for thirty years as Custodian of the John M. Wing Foundation on the History of Printing.
**Michael Laird**  
*Bibliopegic Malfeasance; or: An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain 19th-century American Bookbinders’ Tickets*

The present paper exposes an alarming Texas fraud that involves genuine 19th-century American bookbinders’ tickets being removed from their original bindings and pasted into contemporary unsigned ornamental bindings. These fakes are now widespread and have been unwittingly acquired by curators and private collectors alike. The fraud is calamitous for historians of American bookbinding because the tools on the fake “signed” bindings are being assigned to completely unrelated workshops, thereby infecting and eroding decades of painstaking scholarship.

Michael Laird (MLIS UT Austin 1989) is an antiquarian bookseller and independent scholar residing in Lockhart, Texas.

**D Ryan Lynch**  
*Influencers: Cordelistas as Political Actors in 20th and 21st-Century Brazil*

*Cordels*—a popular and inexpensive Luso-Brazilian chapbook genre combining verse and wood-cut images—decry political scandals, tell stories of political intrigue, and imagine a president’s arrival in hell. They also educate the population about diseases, celebrate Black identity, promote environmentalism, and challenge gender norms. This paper argues that *cordelistas* (cordel creators) were key partners in Brazilian political and social movements in the last half of the 20th century, and that they continue to play a major role in politics and government today.

Ryan Lynch is the Head of Special Collections and Brazilian Studies Librarian for the Benson Latin American Collection at The University of Texas at Austin.

**Jamie Mahoney**  
*Revitalizing Werkman: Maverick Designer and Printmaker*

This paper explores the life and work of Hendrik Werkman, a Dutch avant-garde designer and printmaker known for his innovative printing techniques and typography, including his development of the “hot
printing” technique. Despite his tragic fate during World War II, Werkman’s graphic work remains a testament to his playful, bold, and experimental vision. His legacy continues to inspire contemporary printmakers, as demonstrated by successful workshops teaching his techniques.

Jamie Mahoney is Assistant Professor of the Graphic Design Program in Virginia Commonwealth University’s School of the Arts and Director of Bowe House Press.

Yasmin Rodriguez

LEGO Print Lab

The LEGO Print Lab project is an innovative experiment that explores the potential of combining 3D printing technology with traditional letterpress techniques. The project provides a unique and exciting way to introduce students to the fundamentals of typography and printing. By combining 3D printing technology with traditional letterpress techniques, students are given the opportunity to explore the potential of new and emerging technologies while also learning about the history and craft of printing.

Yasmin Rodriguez is a graphic designer, artist, and professor at Fresno State with four years of experience in higher education.

Jacob Romm


This paper explores the relationship between Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper, a lesbian couple who wrote under the joint pseudonym Michael Field, and Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon, a gay couple who collaboratively published Field, Oscar Wilde, and other queer poets in lavish editions. Using Field’s diaries and letters exchanged between the two couples, I posit that this friendship gives us a window into a queer print culture in Victorian England, and I reflect on my own reprinting of some Field poems to bring their genderqueer possibilities back to life in our time.
Jacob Romm is a Ph.D. candidate in the joint program between Comparative Literature and Early Modern Studies at Yale University.

Levi Sherman

Ojalá: Material and Moral Cheapness on the U.S.-Mexico Border

I will discuss a contemporary artists’ book that harnesses print history to challenge the status quo at the US-Mexico border: Ojalá by Philip Zimmermann and Ernesto León De la Rosa-Carrillo. I will demonstrate that the book’s exaggerated halftone is key among its visual and verbal tactics, as it walks a tightrope between disrupting and reinscribing the violence of the border. With careful attention to—and historical awareness of—print production, the artists successfully hijack the material cheapness of sensationalism to critique its moral cheapness.

Levi Sherman is a Ph.D. student in Art History at University of Wisconsin—Madison.

Szilvia Szmuk-Tanenbaum

Unconventional Characters: The Use of Printers’ Ornaments in 18th-Century Spanish Plays

Plays written during the Golden Age of Spanish literature were printed in individual sheets or booklets and left unbound, hence the term comedias sueltas (“loose plays” in Spanish). They were ephemeral, affordable, and accessible to a wide range of readers, and they covered various genres, including comedy, history, and tragedy. This presentation will contextualize these plays, discuss why there is such a large number of them, and provide an overview of the variety of printers’ ornaments—headpieces, tailpieces, vignettes, etc.—that appear in them.

Szilvia Szmuk-Tanenbaum, an independent scholar, earned her Ph.D. in Spanish literature at the Graduate Center, City University of New York.
Zanna Van Loon
*Leaving the Wrong Impression?: An Intriguing Copy of Aldus Manutius’ Orthographiae Ratio (1564) Published by Christophe Plantin*

In 2021, Museum Plantin-Moretus acquired a later edition of the *Orthographiae ratio*, Aldus Manutius’ treatise on Latin orthography published by Antwerp printer Christophe Plantin (ca. 1520–1589) in 1564. This paper will explore why several pages in the copy bound in a brown goatskin binding with the printer’s mark of the Officina Plantiniana and the motto “Labore et Constantia” tooled with gold on the binding contains unusual loose “dancing” type in the margins.

Zanna Van Loon is Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts at the Museum Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp, Belgium.

M. Wright
*‘Peculiarly Suited’: When Typesetting Became Women’s Work*

Following the transition from hot-metal composition to Linotype and then teletype printers, the typesetting labor force in the U.S. and Canada shifted from majority male to majority female. By contrast, in American colonial and frontier societies it was not uncommon to find women printers and publishers practicing alongside their male counterparts. This presentation will critique the normalization of gender division in the modern typesetting industry, probing its entanglements with technological innovation, organized labor, and capitalism.

M. Wright is an Associate Professor of Graphic Design at the University of Tulsa and co-director of OK Stamp Press (Montreal).

Ring Yong
*Looking at Chinese Woodblocks: A Revised Account of the Technology, its Imprints, and Production Costs*

This paper addresses the historical roles and impact of woodblock printing in late imperial China. With new perspectives drawn from archival sources and scholarship accounts, it examines how woodblock printing
and its output have been shaped and evaluated within a different set of economic and technical considerations. It seeks to reorientate the perception of “printing before typography” without drawing a simple analogy with Gutenberg’s heritage.

RING YONG is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication at the University of Reading.
SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

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