


UNIVERSITY-WIDE RESEARCH GRANTS FOR LIBRARIANS

COVER SHEET

NOTE: Grant proposals are confidential until funding decisions are made.

INSTRUCTIONS: The applicant(s) must submit two (2) copies of their application packet. The application packet consists of the Cover Sheet and the Proposal. Applicants send 1 (one) printed copy of their application packet, with signatures, to the Chair of the divisional research committee, who forwards the packet to the Chair of the university-wide Research and Professional Development Committee. Applicants send the second copy of their application packet as an email attachment to the Chair of the divisional research committee who forwards it on to the Chair of the university-wide Research and Professional Development Committee.

Date of Application: 8 January 2013
Title of Proposal/Project: Bibliography of the works of Russell Maret
Expected Length of Project : 14 months with expected publication date in Fall 2014
Total Funds Requested from LAUC University-Wide Research Funds: \$1587.50
Primary Applicant Your Name (include your signature on the paper copy): Nina M. Schneider  Academic Rank and Working Title: Head Cataloger (Librarian III) Bargaining Unit Member/Non-Member: member Campus Surface Mail Address: Clark Library, 2520 Cimarron Street, Los Angeles, CA 90018 (UCLA mail code: 132149) Telephone and Email Address: (323) 731-8529 nschneider@humnet.ucla.edu URL for home campus directory (will be used for link on LAUC University-Wide Funded Research Grants web page): http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/clarklib/
Co-Applicant(s) Name: n/a Academic Rank and Working Title:

Bargaining Unit Member/Non-Member:
Campus Surface Mail Address:

Telephone and Email Address:

Proposal Abstract (not to exceed 250 words): I am requesting a LAUC Research grant in the amount of \$1,587.50 to work on a descriptive bibliography of the works of Russell Maret. Maret is a printer, publisher, typographer, and book artist based in New York. Beginning with his first works in 1987, this bibliography will cover his monographs, pamphlets, and printed ephemera through his most recent work (which will begin production in the fall of this year). He has produced approximately 50 titles, although this count does not include many unique items or any ephemera or commissioned work. The items described will include editioned works, whether his own creation, collaborations, or commissions, as well as ephemera and unique items. Collected by libraries and private individuals, the bulk of the materials can only be examined on the East Coast; in Manhattan and in McLean, Virginia. I am requesting \$1,587.50 to help offset travel expenses for a research trip in October to examine materials in Maret's New York studio and in a private collection in McLean, Virginia. The expected publication of this bibliography is fall of 2014. It will be designed and produced by Maret.

Does the proposal require any of the following:

Use of UC Library facilities or other site(s) requiring prior approval (Yes/No): no

If yes, include signature and position of person authorized to permit use of facilities on paper copy of application: n/a

Release time (Yes/No): no

If yes, include signature(s) of person(s) authorized to approve release time on paper copy of application: n/a

Use of Human Subjects (Yes/No): no

If yes, attach appropriate university form to paper application form. The process of obtaining IRB approval or a determination of exemption from subject protection regulations does not have to be completed prior to submitting your grant proposal. However, the grant cannot be awarded without evidence that the approval or exemption has been obtained.

List any previous grant proposals (divisional and university-wide) from this program that have been awarded to the primary applicant or co-applicants by title. Include date of completion and amount funded: n/a

Budget Summary

Total amount requested from LAUC statewide research funds: \$1587.50

Total amount requested from LAUC divisional research funds: \$0

Other funding obtained or expected (amount and source): \$0

Fiscal Year of Application (fiscal year that funding begins): 2013/2014

New Project (Yes/No): yes

Supplemental Funding (Yes/No): no

Salaries: \$0

Total Salaries: \$0

Supplies: \$0

Total Supplies: \$0

Travel: \$1587.50

Total Travel: \$1587.50

Other Expenses: n/a

Total Other Expenses: n/a

Total State-Wide Research Funds Requested: \$1587.50

Revised 9/2006 bhg

LAUC Research Grant Proposal
Nina M. Schneider
January 8, 2013

Abstract:

I am requesting a LAUC Research grant in the amount of \$1,587.50 to work on a descriptive bibliography of the works of Russell Maret. Maret is a printer, publisher, typographer, and book artist based in New York. Beginning with his first works in 1987, this bibliography will cover his monographs, pamphlets, and printed ephemera through his most recent work (which will begin production in the fall of this year). He has produced approximately 50 titles, although this count does not include many unique items or any ephemera or commissioned work. The items described will include editioned works, whether his own creation, collaborations, or commissions, as well as ephemera and unique items. Collected by libraries and private individuals, the bulk of the materials can only be examined on the East Coast; in Manhattan and in McLean, Virginia. I am requesting \$1,587.50 to help offset travel expenses for a research trip in October to examine materials in Maret's New York studio and in a private collection in McLean, Virginia. The expected publication of this bibliography is fall of 2014. It will be designed and produced by Maret.

Project Background / Need for Bibliography:

Russell Maret (b. 1971) is a printer, publisher, typographer, and book artist based in New York. His early training and an apprenticeship took place in San Francisco with Joyce Wilson, widow of Adrian Wilson, at the Press in Tuscany Alley and with Peter Rutledge Koch in Berkeley. He relocated to the East Coast in 1991, first to Boston to work as a monotype and linotype caster for Firefly Press, and then to New York where he set up shop as Kuboaa to produce his own work. Quickly recognized for his creativity and outstanding attention to detail, he became artist in residence at the Center for Book Arts in 1996 and was offered a solo exhibition there the following year.¹ He has worked with the poet Robert Bringhurst, artists Lou Hicks and Mikhail Magaril, and papermakers Paul Wong and Mina Takahashi at Dieu Donne Papermill. In 2009 he was awarded the prestigious Rome Prize and he is one of the featured speakers at CODEX 2013.

Amongst numerous public and private collectors of his work is UCLA, with the bulk of it housed at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library. Maret had worked with the Clark's former librarian, Bruce Whiteman, to publish Whiteman's poetry in limited editions. It was Maret's *Aethelwold, Etc.*², his 2009 tour de force of letterform design and multi-color letterpress printing, that prompted the Clark's librarians to acquire his works in earnest. Because he

¹ *Russell Maret & Kuboaa : An Exhibition at Center for Book Arts, New York City, 18 December 1996-11 January 1997*. New York, 1996.

² Maret, Russell. *Aethelwold etc : Twenty-six Letters inspired by Other Letters and Non-letters and Little Bits of Poetry*. New York, 2006

generally publishes in small editions, the work is now scarce and consequently in high demand. His most recent work, *Specimens of Diverse Characters*³, was sold out in a matter of weeks and the secondary market has tripled the original asking price.

Maret approached me during CODEX 2011⁴ about the possibility of researching and writing a bibliography of his works. He felt (and I agreed) that the time was right to create a project of this kind. A rough count totals 50 editioned and unique works which is only a portion of his prolific output. There are exhibition checklists, as well as a listing of published monographs available, but there is no comprehensive bibliography of his work to date.

We have known each other since his days in San Francisco when he would regularly visit Califia Books – a now defunct artists' books gallery in Pacific Heights, where I was working as their cataloger – in order to keep abreast of contemporary works. In 1999, I wrote a background paper about Maret for a graduate course on the private press, taught by visiting scholar, Roderick Cave at UCLA's Department of Information Studies. Although I included descriptions of his works in the paper, it was a far cry from a bibliography and only included works that I was able to see at UCLA and at Mills College in Oakland, California. Initially, Maret was only interested in including editioned works for this project, but during additional conversations I was able to convince him that a bibliography of this kind would be much more valuable if it also included ephemera (such as prospectuses, commissioned invitations and brochures, greeting cards, etc.), as well as unique items. It was only through a comprehensive list that scholars could trace his trajectory, understand his influences, and speculate on his impact on the future arts of the book.

Design and methodology:

Early in his career, a private collector near Washington, DC decided to collect every item that Maret produced, subsequently obtaining the definitive collection. Over the years, Maret has created a number of unique pieces that were sent to this collector. The collector, Allen Mears, has developed a bibliographical checklist of Maret's works for his own use. I plan to use this as a basis for the descriptive bibliography.

Together with Maret, I have identified two recently published bibliographies on modern private presses that can serve as models of this bibliography. Crispin Elsted's *Hoi Barbaroi*⁵ and Robert Rulon-Miller's *Quarter to Midnight*⁶. Both of these publications demonstrate rigorous discipline, careful observation, and witty remarks about the works of Canada's Barbarian Press (Elsted) and Gaylord Schanilec's Midnight Paper Sales Press (Rulon-Miller).

For Maret's bibliography, I'm planning on including quasi-facsimile title-page transcriptions, transcriptions of the colophon, collational formulas (based on Gaskell⁷),

³ Maret, Russell. *Specimens of Diverse Characters*. New York, 2011

⁴ CODEX Foundation : <http://www.codexfoundation.org>

⁵ Elsted, Crispin. *Hoi Barbaroi : A Quarter-century at Barbarian Press*. Mission, British Columbia, 2004

⁶ Rulon-Miller, Robert. *Quarter to Midnight : Gaylord Schanilec & Midnight Paper Sales : A Discursive Bibliography*. St. Paul, Minnesota, 2011

⁷ Gaskell, Roger. *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. New Castle, Delaware, 1995

descriptions of the typefaces, paper, and illustration methods, as well as binding descriptions. Although a print publication, I plan to include a list of authors, uniform titles, and controlled vocabulary (using the Library of Congress authority files⁸, the RBMS Controlled Vocabulary⁹, and Getty's Art & Architecture Thesaurus¹⁰) that will assist scholars in collocating materials in a library environment as well as enabling digital humanists to create significant connections by standardizing the sources.

There are four main locations to view Maret's work: The Clark Library at UCLA, the Rare Books Division of the New York Public Library, Mears' library in McLean, Virginia, and Maret's studio in New York.

In late March, I will travel to New York to survey the items at Maret's studio, as well as items in New York Public Library. I expect to be able to have a few works that are currently held at the Clark Library described before this trip in order to use these descriptions as a basis for revision, or expansion while discussing the items face to face with their creator.

This application is for funding in the amount of \$1587.50 is to offset airfare and ground transportation to examine the bulk of the work, both to confirm what I've completed to date and to examine and describe works held by Allen Mears.

Note: I am also applying for a LAUC-LA mini-grant in the amount of \$373.50 to help offset expenses for the preliminary visit in March 2013.

⁸ Library of Congress Authorities: <http://authorities.loc.gov>

⁹ Bibliographic Standards Committee, Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries. *Controlled Vocabularies for Use in Rare Book and Special Collections Cataloging*:
http://rbms.info/committees/bibliographic_standards/controlled_vocabularies/index.shtml

¹⁰ Getty Research Institute. *The Art & Architecture Thesaurus*:
<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/index.html>

Budget (detailed):

Fares based on current costs from online travel websites, as of Jan. 4, 2013

Travel LAX to JFK = \$350 RT

Lodging in New York = n/a

Car rental (to McLean, VA) = \$87.50/day @ 5 days = \$437.50

Lodging in McLean, VA = \$200/night @ 4 nights = \$800

Total costs: \$1587.50

Amount requested from LAUC-LA mini-Grant funds: \$1587.50

Personnel:

n/a

Timetable:

October 2013:

Trip to New York to confirm item descriptions created during March 2013 preliminary research trip; followed by trip to McLean, VA to examine additional items owned by private collector.

November 2013-February 2014:

Draft and revisions of bibliography

March-April 2014:

Final to Maret for design and typesetting

Fall 2014:

Publication of bibliography by Russell Maret.

Background documents:

Mears, Alan. "Russell Maret" [Unpublished bibliography and archive checklist]. Private collection, 1999.

Schneider, Nina. "Russell Maret & Kuboaa" [Unpublished course paper, 1999]. Available online at http://ninaschneider.com/pdf/Schneider_Maret.pdf

Resumé:

Nina Schneider

William Andrews Clark Memorial Library
2520 Cimarron Street
Los Angeles, CA 90018
Phone: (323) 731-8529
Fax: (323) 731-8617
Email: nschneider@humnet.ucla.edu

Education

- 2000 Department of Information Studies, **UC Los Angeles**: MLIS
- 1990 **Mills College**, Oakland, CA: B.A. in Studio Art and Book Arts
Additional Coursework
 - Rare Book School, University of Virginia
 - 2011: Digitizing the Historical Record
 - 2010: Provenance Evidence
 - 2005: Implementing Encoded Archival Description
 - California Rare Book School, UCLA
 - 2008: History of Book Illustration Processes to 1900
 - 2007: Rare Book Cataloging
 - City University of New York
 - 2004: Language Reading Program (Latin)
- Independent Studies & Internships
 - Development Internship: Special Collections Department, **UCLA**, spring 2000
 - Internship: Slide library, **The J. Paul Getty Museum**, autumn 1999
 - Independent Study: Preservation & Special Collections Division, **Library of Congress**, summer 1999

Work Experience

- August 2007-present:
 - Head Cataloger, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, **UCLA**
- December 2001-July 2007:
 - Cataloger, Henry W. & Albert A. Berg Collection of English & American Literature, **New York Public Library**
- December 2002 - May 2003 / March 2004 - March 2005:
 - Cataloger, Department of Printed Books & Bindings, **Pierpont Morgan Library**
- November 2000 - November 2001:
 - Project Archivist, Fowler Museum of Cultural History, **UCLA**
- August 1993 - May 1998:
 - Program Director, **Center for Book Arts**, New York
- June 1990 - June 1993:
 - Associate Manager, **Califia Books**, San Francisco

Teaching and Presentations

2011

Z702 is for Book Thief: The Role of Technical Services in Collection Security.
2011 RBMS Preconference seminar on cataloging and security, Baton Rouge,
LA: Program chair and moderator

2010

To Catch a Thief, Cataloging and the Security of Special Collections, 2010 ALA
Conference, Washington, DC: Moderator

Staff Development Day at the Pasadena Public Library: Speaker

Southern California Technical Processors' Group Special Collections
Cataloging Workshop, Los Angeles, CA: Co-instructor

2008

Workshop on "Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books)" 2008 RBMS
Preconference, Los Angeles, CA: Co-instructor

2006

Cataloging Artists' Books, Challenges and Solutions. 2006 RBMS
Preconference seminar, Austin, TX: Speaker

Published Articles & Research

2013 [expected]:

Examples to Accompany Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books)
Catalogers' Desktop, Library of Congress. <http://desktop.loc.gov>

2011:

"Broadsides!" Campos, Alexander and Jen Larson. *Multiple, Limited, Unique:
Selections from the Permanent Collection of the Center for Book Arts.* New
York: Center for Book Arts, 2011

2005:

A Brilliant Luster: Festschrift for the Center for Book Arts at 30, Center for
Book Arts, Annual Artists' Members Exhibition, summer 2005

1995:

A Visit to Dobbin Papermill, Interview. Guild of Bookworkers Newsletter no.
99 (April 1995): pp. 8 & 9

Book review of "The Preservation of Library Materials: a Manual" by Susan
Swartzburg. *koob stra* 11 (Spring 1995)

1994:

Conference report on "The Art Preservative: From the History of the Book Back
to Printing History. A Lecture by Michael Winship." APHA Newsletter 118
(October-December 1994)

Exhibition review of "Broken Rules and Double Crosses", Ken Campbell, an Artist's Books at the New York Public Library. Guild of Bookworkers Newsletter no. 96 (October 1994): pp. 14 & 15

Curated Exhibitions

2012:

Going Clubbing: Mr. Clark and the Book Club of California. Clark Library, UCLA. On view March 22-June 15, 2012

2011:

All Things New: Imperialism and Impact, co-curated with Rebecca Fenning Marschall. Clark Library, UCLA. On view: October 11-December 20, 2011

Bible. English. Authorized: Celebrating 400 Years of the King James Bible. Clark Library, UCLA. On view: April 11- June 30, 2011

2009:

Star Struck: An Exhibition in Honor of the Year of Astronomy. Clark Library, UCLA. On view: October 8-December 18, 2009

2008:

Compendium Perfectum, or, The Compleat Person: English Self-Help Books of the 17th and 18th Centuries. Clark Library, UCLA. On view: May 1-June 30, 2008

Co-Curated Exhibitions at Center for Book Arts, New York

1997: Coptic & Collage

1996: Geometry & New Math: Books about Sex

Grimm & Grimmer

Mysterious Worlds: Bookworks by Artist Members

Paper, Art & the Book

1995: This Day in History

Latin American Book Arts

1994: Anthropomorphic Book

Committee & Other Professional Service

2013: Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC-LA) Executive Committee, Statewide Representative

2010-2012: ACRL's Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) 2012 Preconference Program Committee, Co-chair

2010-2012: LAUC-LA Programs Committee, Member

2010-2013: RBMS Executive Committee, Member-at-Large

2010-2013: American Printing History Association Southern California Chapter, Program Chair

2008-2010: RBMS Bibliographical Standards Committee, Controlled Vocabularies Subcommittee, Editor

2009-2010: RBMS 2010 Conference Program Committee, Chair

2007- : Advisory Committee on Cataloging and Metadata, UCLA, Member

2007: American Printing History Association New York Chapter, Member-at-Large

2006-2008: American Printing History Association Fellowship Committee, Chair
2005-2008: RBMS Bibliographical Standards Committee, Thesaurus Subcommittee,
Member
2005-2007: Mills College Club of New York, President
2004-2005: RBMS Bibliographical Standards Committee, Intern
2004-2007: American Printing History Association, Board of Directors, Secretary
2003-2005: AMC/EAD Discussion Group, NYPL, Member
2003-2004: RBMS 2004 Preconference Program Planning Committee, Member
2002-2003: RBMS 2003 Preconference Program Planning Committee, Member
2001: California Digital Library's Online Archive of California (OAC) Working Group
on Metadata Standards, Member

Related Knowledge & Skills

Typesetting, letterpress printing, and bookbinding.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, slanted lines that form a stylized, cursive-like mark.

LAUC Librarians Association of the University of California

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET INFORMATION

This Sheet Must Accompany the Grant Application

PER DIEM

Please indicate the source of the per diem rates used in the application

- a. Federal Government
- b. University
- c. Other _____
- d. Other _____

Location	Rate	Source
----------	------	--------

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

TRAVEL

Please indicate the source of the travel information used in the application

- a. Federal Government
- b. University
- c. Internet Search (list which service used) Orbitz.com
- d. Travel Agency
- e. Other _____

Location	Type	Amount	Rate	Source
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- | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------|----------|-------------|---|
| 1 LAX to JFK | Air | \$350 | | C |
| 2. NY to McLean, VA | Car | \$437.50 | \$87.50 x 5 | C |
| 3. McLean, VA | Lodging | \$800 | \$200 x 4 | C |
| 4. | | | | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |

Russell Maret & Kuboaa

Nina M. Schneider
IS 287-2: The Private Press

9 December 1999

My thanks to Allen Mears for his assistance.

“All at once I snapped my fingers a couple of times and laughed. Hellfire and damnation! I suddenly imagined I had discovered a new word! I sat up in bed, and said: It is not in the language, I have discovered it -- Kuboaa. It has letters just like a real word, by sweet Jesus, man, you have discovered a word! ...Kuboaa...of tremendous linguistic significance... I had discovered the word myself, and I was perfectly within my rights to let it mean whatever I wanted it to, for that matter. So far as I knew, I had not yet committed myself...”

Knut Hamsun, *Hunger*

Sitting in a dark bar and enjoying a refreshing beverage on a summer night when the temperature still hovers near 85-degrees can be a welcome relief from a long day. It was in just these circumstances when I asked my friend Russell if he would be willing to be a guinea pig for a research paper I was starting in October. At that point, I had known him for close to five years and watched with amazement every time he went to work. Russell Maret is a book artist in the true sense of the word. He designs, prints, occasionally writes and grudgingly binds his own books under the imprint of Kuboaa. Living and working in New York has exposed him to many private presses and their owners but his awakening happened in San Francisco. It is this city that I think of when thinking about Russell.

Two of Russell Maret's favorite books are Jack Stauffacher's edition of Plato's *Phaedrus* and Keith Smith's *Book of String*. The two could not be any different. Stauffacher's is a typographic masterpiece. Smith's is a technical masterpiece -- all about structure, light, and sequence. One has no illustrations, the other has no text but for Russell “they are both perfect examples of self-transcending books -- they are perfect visual and tactile vehicles for the text.” These books have influenced him subconsciously, blending the two disciplines into an opus that is completely his own.

This essay explores Russell's influences, his background, and how he markets his work. The books described are from a four year period chosen because it includes the first Kuboaa work and because I was able to witness their productions firsthand. As much as I would have enjoyed continuing our conversation in that bar in New York, I had to settle for electronic mail and phone calls while researching this paper.

Family Background

Russell Maret's printing roots run deep. Lyman Thomas, his great grandfather was a linotype compositor. But even earlier on his maternal side is Russell's great, great, great, great grandfather Francis Bailey, a Philadelphia printer during the Revolutionary era. According to Russell, Bailey holds the first United States Patent -- now housed at the Library of Ohio State University Law School -- which he got for a type design. (It was actually the third patent but the first two have been lost) Bailey had learned his craft from another early settler, Peter Miller.¹

Peter Miller was one of the original settlers of Ephrata in Lancaster County of what is now Pennsylvania. In 1746, thirteen years after the settlement of this German town, Miller opened a printing house and papermill. Miller had learned printing from Christopher Sower after immigrating to Pennsylvania.² Miller's focus was German language religious books and Miller wrote most of these himself. During 1748 and 1749 Miller wrote and printed *Blutigen Schau Platzes* [literally translated as Bloody Show Places]. This 428-page book was printed on the paper from the Ephrata mill. His assistant

¹ Thomas, Isaiah. *The History of Printing in America*. New York: Weathervane Books, 1970, p.

² Ibid, p. 426

was Francis Bailey and during this time both Miller and Bailey slept on a wooden bench with a wooden block for their pillows.³

Francis Bailey was born in approximately 1735, the son of Robert Bailey and Margaret McDill and one of six children. The Baileys were early settlers of Lancaster County. Bailey had been apprenticed to a carpenter but his association with Peter Miller influenced his future profession. Bailey and Stewart Herbert opened for business in 1771 with the publication of the LANCASTER ALMANAC. Bailey continued publishing the ALMANAC with the assistance of his brother Jacob and sister, Abigail after the partnership broke up the following year.⁴

Just after the war Bailey began to publish the FREEMAN'S JOURNAL in Philadelphia, a weekly journal that appeared each Wednesday. The opening address by Bailey on the first publication states that "THE FREEMAN'S JOURNAL is an emphatic and well known name; it suits the times; and is therefore adopted to distinguish and entitle our Paper. We fixedly design that it will correspond with its title; and. . .[i]t will be open to queries, hints, cards, satires, essays, strictures, dissertations, poems, advertisements extraordinary, etc."⁵ Its motto was "Open to All Parties, but influenced by None."⁶ The first number of the JOURNAL contains a statement on the freedom of the press attributed to Benjamin Franklin.

Bailey had published books and journals during the Revolutionary War and in 1778 he joined in the publication of the UNITED STATES MAGAZINE. This short-lived

³ Ibid, p. 424

⁴ Dzwonkoski, Peter, editor. *Dictionary of Literary Biography, volume 49: American Literary Publishing Houses, 1638-1899, Part I:A-M*. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Company, 1986, p. 33.

⁵ *The Freeman's Journal or the North-American Intelligencer*. No. 1 (25 April 1781): p. 1.

⁶ Adams, James Truslow, editor. *Dictionary of American History, Volume II*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940, p. 339

journal resulted in Bailey becoming acquainted with members of the continental Congress. In 1780 he was commissioned to print the *Constitution of Several Independent States Of America, The Declaration of Independence, and the Treaties between His Most Christian Majesty and the United States of America* in one volume.⁷ Thus did Bailey become the official printer for Congress and the State of Pennsylvania, publishing the first printed laws of that state.

Francis Bailey was also actively publishing special commissions such as Philip Freneau's poems -- he printed *Freneau's The British Prison Ship: A Poem in Four Cantoes* in 1781 and in 1786 published *The Poems of Philip Freneau, Written Chiefly During the Late War* -- critically acclaimed as "the best collection of one poet's verse yet produced in America."⁸ His business continued to grow during the 18th century. He owned offices in Philadelphia, as well as a small country residence fourteen miles east of Philadelphia, and the family's Sadsbury estate that his parents bequeathed to him.⁹ When Bailey died in 1815 his daughter-in-law, Lydia Bailey, carried on the publishing business.

Lydia was one of the first woman printers of Philadelphia.¹⁰ She was primarily a publisher of children's books and was a regular printer for Johnson and Warner, as well as the Philadelphia Female Tract Society. Her son Robert eventually took over the publishing business and when he died in 1861, Lydia Bailey retired. She died in 1869.

The Cincinnati Art Museum has a pair of paintings by Charles Wilson Peale of Francis & his wife -- she is holding a Bible and Bailey is holding a large piece of type (a

⁷ Dzwonkoski, p. 33

⁸ Winterich, John T. *Early American Books and Printing*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co./The Riverside Press Cambridge, 1935.

⁹ Johnson, Allen, editor. *Dictionary of American Biography, volume I*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964, p. 495

capital A). Russell told me that he grew up with reproductions of these paintings in his dining room, but never noticed what his grandfather was holding or understood what he had done until after Russell started printing.

Predecessors

During the time Bailey was printing the FREEMAN'S JOURNAL a group of settlers arrived in the wilds of Northern California to colonize the area for Spain. Thirty years after Bailey's death, a group of Mormons docked in the bay next to this small settlement, then known as Yerba Buena, with the purpose of founding a Mormon home outside of the United States.¹¹ Led by Samuel Brannan, their arrival was greeted with the news that the American government they were running away from now extended from Oklahoma's panhandle to the Pacific Ocean. From this miscalculated beginning, the tradition of private presses in the Bay Area grew.

Instead of resuming the search for a Mormon homeland, Brannan and his group settled in this town (soon to be called San Francisco). He had brought with him a wooden press and a supply of type and with these tools produced a weekly newspaper called the CALIFORNIA STAR.¹² With the growth of the city came a growth of literary culture. In the 1860's Edward Bosqui was publishing contemporary local literature and Charles Murdock was producing works for children. It would take another thirty years for San Francisco to begin its tradition of producing important private presses.

¹⁰ Dzwonkoski, p. 33

¹¹ Hart, James D. *Fine Printing: The San Francisco Tradition*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1985, p. 7-8

¹² *Ibid*, p. 8

John Henry Nash arrived in San Francisco in 1895¹³ and began making a name for himself in 1916 with important commissioned works by such patrons as William Randolph Hearst and William Andrews Clark, as well as the Book Club of California.¹⁴ The Grabhorn brothers, not quite a generation younger than Nash, started producing books in 1919 and they in turn have influenced many presses.

Jumping ahead a few decades, these early connections to Russell become clear. Adrian Wilson, the proprietor of the Press in Tuscany Alley learned his craft during his stay in a conscientious objectors' camp during World War II. Born in 1923 he briefly studied at Wesleyan University before the outbreak of the war. When he arrived at the camp in Waldport Oregon, William Everson and William Eshelman had already set up a printing press.¹⁵ Eshelman was responsible for teaching Wilson how to set type.¹⁶ When the war ended and the camp closed, Wilson, Everson and others who had been at the camp relocated to San Francisco. This major influx of artists and writers into the city "created a spontaneous flowering of the arts which was later called the 'San Francisco Renaissance.'"¹⁷

Wilson worked for a brief time with Jack Stauffacher until he branched out on his own creating playbills for the Interplayers, a theater group he organized with his wife Joyce Lancaster Wilson. Jack Stauffacher was becoming an important printer and typographer when Wilson worked with him. Stauffacher had visited the Grabhorns and Nash, studying their work before founding the Greenwood Press. He also spent time in

¹³ Ibid, p. 11

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 21

¹⁵ Rather, Lois. *Remembering Adrian*. Oakland, CA: Rather Press Addenda, 1989

¹⁶ Adrian Wilson obituary. SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS (4 February 1988), np

¹⁷ Hart, James D. "The Book Club of California: Its Impress on Fine Printing" in *Influences on California Printing*. Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1970, p. 14

Italy studying typography and book design. This education, exploration of layout and letterform, and his own interpretations of European styles of typography are his most significant contributions to the book arts.¹⁸ He no doubt influenced the work of the young Wilson.

Throughout the years Joyce Wilson collaborated on many projects with Adrian. She wrote and illustrated children's books and their 1978 publication of *the Child's Garden of Verses* by Robert Louis Stevenson was met with critical acclaim.¹⁹ The Wilsons took a scholarly tour of Europe for their research of another important work *The Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle*. In the 1980s they published *The Work & Play of Adrian Wilson* and after Wilson's death in 1988, Joyce published *The Ephemera of Adrian Wilson* with the assistance of James Linden.

Adrian Wilson taught and mentored many printers whom today are teaching the craft to a new generation of book artists. In her introductory essay to an exhibition entitled "Five Fine Printers," Sandra Kirshenbaum writes that many young artists are following the examples of Everson, Hoyem, Wilson and Stauffacher that have been set over thirty or forty years. These "new" presses include Amaranth Press, Arif Press, Black Stone Press, Five Trees Press, Rebis Press and Poltroon Press.²⁰ Today, these "young" presses are being studied by a new generation of printing students.

Peter Koch, formerly of Black Stone Press, was one of Wilson's students. In 1978 Koch began a one-year apprenticeship with Adrian Wilson. Through a special program

¹⁸ Kirshenbaum, Sandra, editor. *Five Fine Printers: Jack Stauffacher, Adrian Wilson, Richard Bigus, Andrew Hoyem, William Everson - an exhibition, February 22-April 10, 1979*. Davis, CA: University of California, np

¹⁹ Obituary Notes, Adrian Wilson. *AB* (7 March 1988) p. 976

²⁰ Kirshenbaum, np

set up by the California Arts Council, Koch was appointed the Maestro-Apprentice at Tuscany Alley.²¹ He and Wilson collaborated on a number of books -- both during and after Koch's apprenticeship -- including Michael Poage's *Handbook of Ornament* and *The Master of Yellow Plum Mountain* by John Beecher,²² both in 1979, and Susan Roether's *Reflections on Color* in 1982.²³

After Wilson's death, Tuscany Alley became a teaching press associated with San Francisco State University. Koch was appointed Master Printer. And this is where Russell enters the picture.

The Biography

Why this review of private press printers? Following an almost direct line from Nash and the Grabhorns comes Jack Stauffacher, William Everson and Adrian Wilson, Peter Koch and James Whelage, and now Russell Maret. Russell has admitted that Stauffacher has been an important influence on his work, as it was on Peter Koch's before him. I believe that each of these printers has had an influence on Russell, no matter how indirect. It is important to understand this cycle to place Russell in a historical context.

I asked Russell for a chronology and what he returned was an essay so thorough and charming that I am almost tempted to quote it verbatim. He was born in New Rochelle, New York on June 30th, 1971. Five years later his parents moved to Mohegan

²¹ *Peter Koch, Printer, recent works*. Cambridge, MA: Department of Printing & Graphic Arts, the Houghton Library, Harvard University, 1995.

²² Linden, James. *The Ephemera of Adrian Wilson: an annotated list, 1944-1988*. San Francisco, CA: The Press in Tuscany Alley

²³ Cave, Roderick. *The Private Press*. New York: R.R. Bowker, 1983, p. 271

Lake with Russell and his younger brother John. His mother and father worked in Manhattan and the commute required that his parents leave the house each morning at 6:30, returning at night at 8:00. Knowing that they were trudging to jobs neither particularly liked, Russell decided that he would have to find an alternative career.

His parents had been English majors at Marietta College in Ohio and the Maret household was filled with books. Russell claims that he was a late bloomer when it came to reading and his first interest in books was to simply look at them and then put them back on their shelf. Raised an atheist, he enrolled in the Archbishop Stepinac Parochial Catholic High School for Boys in White Plains, New York, at the age of fourteen in an act of teenage rebellion.

During his sophomore year he took a week-long trip to England and met a girl named Monica McIntosh. She had him so confused and worked up that he wrote her a poem and, as he puts, "actually got some action." This was when he realized the power of the written word and he returned to Stepinac a "changed man." He dropped out of school not long after this incident. It was triggered by Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* - - no doubt a class assignment and probably a surprise to his instructor. He found a job unloading trucks with CVS Pharmacy and worked on getting his high school diploma by night.

He moved to San Francisco in 1989 and enrolled at the New College of California. It was there he took his first printing class with Ralph Ackerman and became instantly hooked. When I asked Russell what prompted him to take a printing class in the first place he replied, "I've never figured out what exactly got me to sign up for a printing class. When I went to California, I was convinced that I was going to be a great poet, but

the moment I handled a piece of type, I realized that what I had always loved was the physical presence of books, not writing them. It's connected to my childhood when I would spend hours just picking up books. Anyway, printing is the only true instance of love at first sight that I've experienced...and the only thing that I've been able to commit to unconditionally. It is the only form of expression I've found through which I hide nothing, in some ways it is my only honest communication with the world. I know all of this sounds very melodramatic, but it is how I feel."

It was at the New College where he met Peter Koch in January of 1990 and he dropped out of school to study with him. Koch was working on Ephesus' *Herakleitos* -- a typographical homage to Jack Stauffacher. Russell was assigned to print one page spread from the book, as well as the errata sheet for the prospectus. Apparently Koch had taken the manuscript of the prospectus to M&H Type in San Francisco and after receiving the galleys, he printed it without taking a proof, assuming that the compositors would catch any errors. Unfortunately there were four errors in the text that probably hurt the sales of the book but gave Russell an important lesson on what not to do. Another project Russell worked on was *Notebook Poems*, the supposed first printing of Robert Duncan's work. He set the type and assisted Koch in the layout and printing.

He moved into the Press in Tuscany Alley in May of that year. Koch had introduced Russell to Joyce Wilson and arranged for his residency there. Another former apprentice of Wilson's, James Whelage of Anchor & Acorn Press, provided Russell an intensive one-day workshop on Wilson's Heidelberg Cylinder press. While he was living at Tuscany Alley he was also assisting Koch with his printing classes. "How did you help if you were just learning yourself?" I asked him. "Oh, you know," he replied, "I sat

around and watched and ran down the street for café lattes.” While Koch was publishing Duncan’s poems, Russell used the type-forms that were still standing to practice on the Heidelberg. So Russell was in fact, the first to print these poems and as a joke he submitted them to a Pacific Center for the Book Arts exhibition. Berkeley book dealer, Burton Weiss saw the book and offered \$200 for it.

Four months later Russell found himself accompanying Joyce Wilson on a tour of English private presses. It was on this trip where he met Will and Sebastian Carter of Rampant Lions Press, David Kindersley, a former apprentice of Eric Gill and others. He did not mention whether or not he was able to contact Miss McIntosh to resume where they left off.

Shortly after their return Russell moved out of Tuscany Alley and eventually returned to New York in the early summer of 1991. By August he was in Boston, living with his girlfriend, Denise, from San Francisco and working at Firefly Press. There he worked and studied with John Kristensen. It was a commercial printshop producing invitations, stationery, programs, posters, diplomas, brochures, and pamphlets and used Joseph Blumenthal's Spiral Press as their business model²⁴ Although there was no love lost between Russell and Kristensen, he was able to learn a lot from him, including the operation of a Monotype keyboard and caster and the Linotype machine. He stayed for less than a year because although Kristensen was a skilled printer and designer he was also very conservative and had a tendency to frown on typographic experimentation. By the end of April 1992 Russell thought that he had had enough of printing and moved with Denise to Portland, Oregon. The only job he was able to find was delivering newspapers

from three to seven in the mornings. Four months later he left his girlfriend and went to Albuquerque to help his uncle build a woodshop. In January of 1993 he finally returned to New York and established Kuboaa.

In 1996 with at least ten books under his belt and numerous commissions for letterpress printed jobs, he became the Artist-in-Residence at the Center for Book Arts in Manhattan. Less than two months ago he bought a Vandercook press and moved to his own studio in the meat-packing district of New York City, not far from the Hogs & Heifers Saloon.

The Books

Meditation on Saviors

I met Russell in 1993 and have been fortunate enough to see most Kuboaa press books during production. I can remember the long days he spent in the studio creating and perfecting his books including the first title published under this imprint. *Meditation on Saviors* by Robinson Jeffers is perhaps the most appropriate initial offering he could have made in light of his education.

The book is both technically beautiful and wonderfully designed. This poem by Jeffers is printed on six sheets of handmade Kitikata paper in Centaur type. Seven stanzas are printed in black with the title printed in royal blue. The six sheets are adhered onto a balsa wood frame that is backed with Ume Yuzen decorative paper. The Yuzen paper has a pattern of bamboo leaves, waves, and flowers in light blue, Prussian blue, black, gold,

²⁴ Westreich, Alice and Bud Westreich, editors. *Sixth International Directory of Private Presses (letterpress)*. Sacramento, CA: privately printed, 1993.

white, purple, and light lavender. The six panels are accorded together with brass hinges making the book reminiscent of a Japanese shoji screen

Opening the housing is like opening a jewel box. The book is very light and appears very delicate but the materials are strong. It is a conservative and quiet piece and yet extremely beautiful and an amazing first publication. When I first saw it I did not care for it. I thought that the Yuzen paper was not appropriate for what otherwise would be very clean and classic object. It seemed over the top. However, when I looked at it again, five years later, I realized that it was the perfect tension between the strength of the poem and the delicacy of its appearance.

The edition is accompanied by a mixed-media print by Paul Mallowney. It consists of an elevation map of the California coast with abstract images painted in burgundy and a glassine envelope filled with seed-pods. The whole is painted over with a transparent gesso. Although quite a contrast from Maret's book, it is appropriate to the spirit of the poem. Apparently Mallowney wandered in to Tuscany Alley while Russell was in residence and introduced himself. For three years they discussed the idea of working together and when they finally did, it resulted in a disparate print in its own envelope.

"How do I start a book?" replied Russell to an early question. "It's almost always different. Collaborative books usually start with a conversation with an artist, or with the receipt of a manuscript. With my own work, it usually starts with a visual or physical reaction to words or ideas, which happens fairly regularly. . .with *Meditation* it was the juxtaposition of a fragile form with rock-like words."

Images of a Voice

The same year in which *Meditations* was published also saw the completion of another book of poetry, *Images of a Voice* by Mary Louise Cox with prints by Lou Hicks. This was the first commissioned book of poetry Russell worked on in a somewhat collaborative manner. He designed, printed and bound the fifty copies of the debut collection of Cox's poetry although the illustrations consist of Hicks' lithographs printed by Randy and Amy Folkman at Lonetown Press.

His ingenious design is based somewhat on Asian side sewn bindings in which the folded edges of the sheets of paper are found on the fore-edge instead of on the spine. Hand-set Bembo was printed on Folio Antique paper. The pages consist of two sheets, each printed on one side and adhered vertically at the edges and then folded vertically down the middle. The pages are sewn in the lower gutter, resulting in a full page spread for the lithographs without the interruption of sewing thread in the middle of the prints. The text is printed on the "inside" sheet where the sewing appears. The gatherings are sewn through the fold and over linen tapes into cloth covered boards. Shorter lengths of linen tape serve as fore-edge ties. There is a whirlpool image printed on the front and back covers in a "tea-stained" color. The title text on the front cover is printed in gray.

Looking at the contents, the titles within are printed in trans-base ink with a slight tint and the text is printed in black. The lithographs vary but are all printed in subtle shades of colors such as tan, slate gray, sand, fleshy pink, gold, and brownish pink. For the most part, the poems are printed onto their own pages although the first, middle and

last poem are printed over the lithograph. There are fourteen poems in all and two are longer than can fit on one page.

This book is less successful than his *Meditation on Saviors*, perhaps because it involved so many individuals. And perhaps because of shop conditions it is also not as technically accomplished as the Jeffers' poem. There was too much roller pressure during the printing of the titles and somewhat uneven printing on the text that could be the result of uneven rollers or worn type. Russell's earlier work proves that he understands proper inking and roller height. The binding is also a problem. The sewing is unstable and use has caused the tapes to loosen and thus become ineffective as stabilizers.

Elements

The following year saw the publication of *Elements*. Russell needed to find a way to combine the images of Norwegian artist Ulf Nilsen and the poetry of Robert Bringhurst. The challenge of *Elements* was to create a successful combination of design, technique and material. The piece is quite unlike anything Russell had done before. "The contents are a collaborative meditation on the elements of air, earth, fire & water." [from colophon] It consists of five boxes, one for each of the four elements plus one box of poetry. These five boxes contain handmade paper from Dieu Donn  Papermill of New York. The papers are Abaca for the text, Cotton for the air, Silk for the water, Abaca-Cotton for the fire, and Belgian Linen-Cotton for the earth, all of which were made especially for this edition. The boxes are in turn housed in a large clamshell box covered in black binder's cloth with the word "Elements" blind embossed on the spine.

The first box, that of Bringhurst's poetry, is covered in a natural linen cloth. The Abaca sheets have been printed letterpress using Gills Sans Medium in black ink. The paper has a coarse texture and a rough deckle and yet the printing is technically perfect. There are fifteen sheets in this box, which include seven poems and the colophon sheet. The poetry is about the four elements of the earth and how they affect and effect us. Sometimes the elements are our friends, other times they can be our enemy.

The Earth box is made from African and Honduran mahogany. Thick in weight and coarse in texture the leaves of paper are reminiscent in feel to that of blotter paper yet they are very stiff and oatmeal in color. Nilsen's figures, while clearly representing human beings, are abstracted and almost cartoon-like. They remind me of a mixture that includes Keith Haring and Eric Gill. There are five sheets of this paper which have been wet-pulp embossed -- that is, couching the paper on a raised mold to create the embossing.

The element of Air is represented with watermarked paper. The cotton is a very pure white and lightweight but with coarse texture (almost like a watercolor paper yet lighter in weight). Once again there are five leaves in which human figures appear. This is the only element in the series that clearly represents women. The box is made of gold and blue Japanese cloth.

The Water sheets are letterpress printed in transparent ink on silk paper. Silk fibers become a smooth white paper with a rough deckle. "Water" is drawn in a sort of art nouveau style. As in the other boxes the human figures are once again present on the sheets of paper. This time there is one kneeling on a shore. On the next sheet, it appears that he has just put his forehead into the water and in the third sheet there are two figures

apparently treading water. The fourth and fifth sheets have abstracted shapes. The first three sheets may have been printed using two blocks since the line representing the shore is a line where the printing block did not come into contact with the paper. I did not ask Russell about his detail and could find no information that would confirm this theory.

The element of Fire was created by branding the paper and some of the edges were burned in the process. These images are all about fire and light. The five sheets are housed in a copper box that has been burned and patinated. This element was the most appropriate for this period in Russell's life. While he was working on *Elements* his apartment was destroyed by a fire. Since he had nowhere to sleep and he had a tight deadline for this book he would spend many nights at the Center for Book Arts. He told me that sleeping on the tables in the studio reminded him of Francis Bailey's arrangement -- sleeping on wood crates while working with Peter Miller.

Noise for Sloane

During the period in which *Elements* was being produced, Russell was also working on *Noise for Sloane*. Sloane Madureira entered Russell's life at just about the time he was working on *Elements*. She is an artist and has worked with Russell to create painted surfaces for some of his book covers and illustrations for some of his broadsides. She has helped him print and bind his books and in September of 1997 she married him.

Noise is a series of four books he wrote, designed and printed as a typographic homage. The periodical, FINE PRINT published an article on avant-garde design in Dutch bookmaking just after Russell moved to San Francisco. He admits that seeing the journal

and reading about the typographic collages of Hendrik Werkman greatly inspired him -- especially while he was designing the *Noise* series.

Hendrik Werkman (1882-1945) was a leader in the Dutch typographic and design avant-garde.²⁵ With a background in journalism, printing, graphic arts and publishing, Werkman was aware of the new experimentation in typography and graphic design taking place just after World War I. After visiting a series of international exhibitions in Amsterdam, he published *THE NEXT CALL*. First printed in 1923, the magazine was dedicated to ideas about art, society and politics and was a vehicle for his experimental typography. By the time he issued his fourth volume, he was sending *THE NEXT CALL* to other avant-garde magazines throughout Europe and was receiving foreign periodicals in exchange. Although he could not always read them, he was able to study designs from other artists. Inspired by Dada and Constructivist ideas, the magazine was the creation and production of Werkman alone instead of a group of like-minded individuals as was usually the case. The periodical lasted through nine issues, the last produced in 1928. What made *THE NEXT CALL* unique were the illustrations Werkman achieved through the use of typography. "They were a form of typographic collage in which wooden display type, numerals, rules, old locks, wood blocks, and cardboard shapes were combined to form abstract compositions."²⁶ He placed the paper face up on the bed of the press and inking the type directly, he would then lay it on the paper in his desired pattern. In the case of multiple colors, uneven heights within the form, or in layering, the page would sometimes have to be run through the press fifty times.

²⁵ Strauss, Monica. "Dutch Book Design - The Avant-Garde Tradition" *FINE PRINT* 15, No. 4 (October 1989):176-184

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 177

He generally used wood type letters and numbers as elements in his design. His proclivity to allow the irregular surfaces to remain as an inherent part of the design and even drawing attention to these inherent flaws was similar to the Constructivists' interest in art that explores the nature of its own materials. Working in relative obscurity, it was not until Willem Sandberg showed Werkman's compositions to his colleagues in Amsterdam after the Second World War, that Werkman was invited to exhibit his work in the city's museum.²⁷ His typographic and mechanical experiments do indeed remind me of Russell's *Noise*.

These four books are some of my favorites. The palette is limited to black and red ink although the number of press runs effect the color density and appearance. Using a technique of blind printing, ink transfer from a brayer and collage, Russell has managed to create a unique typographic experiment of his own. Reminiscent of palimpsests or a television screen with bad reception, the type pops out of this white noise with a resounding plop. *Noise 1* is letterpress printed with brayer-offset prints using wood and metal type and printed on Arches Text paper. The book consists of thirteen loose sheets in a cloth covered drop-back box. It is a one-of-a-kind.

The other three books in the series were completed in 1996. *Noise 2* is also printed letterpress with brayer offset prints on Arches Text paper. For this book Russell bound the pages in an accordion format with a letterpress printed cloth-covered board which is then housed in a cloth-covered drop back box. *Noise 2* is small, measuring about 6 X 4 and this time in an edition of three copies. *Noise 3* incorporates some of the same

²⁷ Ibid, p. 178

techniques as the two previous books but includes a found essay. It is printed on Rives de Lin paper in the *livres d'artistes* tradition of loose sheets housed in a portfolio. Russell limited the edition to four. *Noise 4* is letterpress printed with blind printing also on Rives de Lin and it is sewn into a paper wrapper. The last book in the series was printed in an edition of eight. The series is now out-of-print.

The books use Werkman as an inspiration without plagiarizing him. Although fairly smooth to the touch, there is a sense that the type is set deep within the paper, almost biting through to the other side. Together these books just seem very modern and unique to me and quite unlike anything I have seen before, or since.

Incidents

Collaboration always has half a chance at success. In 1996 while Russell was the artist-in-residence at the Center for Book Arts he collaborated with the Center's apprentice Mikhail Magaril to produce *Incidents* by Russian poet Daniel Kharms. Unlike Russell's earlier collaboration, *Images of a Voice*, I think that he and Magaril pulled this one off. Of course this was not a commissioned piece. It was a true collaboration and the colophon credits both as the designers and illustrators. It also seemed as a though it was done as a relief from the technical difficulties of the *Commedia* -- more of that in a moment.

Using letterpress, hand printing, photocopy, collage, monoprint, woodblock prints, pochoir and painting, *Incidents* could almost be accused of plagiarizing Werkman, or at least the whole school of Constructivism. Wood type, furniture, and press gears are printed on the same page in different colors. What could have been a very labor intensive

edition was offset by its small size, there were only eight copies made. It is a tall and narrow book, measuring 20 X 9 inches and the whimsy of it shows up even on the slipcase that consists of paper, cloth, buttons and yarn. Although quite different from his previous work, *Incidents* is a successful deviation.

Commedia Dell'Arte

As I mentioned earlier, Russell used *Incidents* as a break from what was his most ambitious project to date. In 1996 he started a project that culminated in *The Players & Paradigms of the Commedia Dell'Arte*. He was prompted by the technical difficulties of using watercolor paints as a printing medium. After each press run he was required to clean the rollers in order not to ruin his pages or the printing press. Considering that the book is twenty-five pages with at least three colors per page, this was one of the most labor-intensive projects I witnessed.

The *Commedia* is a book in two parts. The first section introduces the reader to the players of the *Commedia*, illustrating their personas and providing the common and historical names of each character. The second part of the book consists of the paradigms as interpreted by Russell. The characters are reproduced onto magnesium plates from a variety of 17th and 18th century engravings. As the pages were printed on a Vandercook, the oils from the press and the watercolors separated to create an aura around each figure. At times subtle and at other times severe, these bleeds of color juxtapose with the crisp lines of the figure wonderfully. The text is printed in Palatino, Sistina and Eve types on Rives de Lin paper. The type bites deeply into the paper so that the strong colors of the thirty-nine illustrations do not overwhelm the text.

Edition Rhino

1996 was a busy year for Russell. In addition to the *Commedia* and *Incidents* he was again commissioned by Lou Hicks to design and publish her collaboration with Mary Louise Cox, entitled *Songs of Ordinary Times*. This commission much more successful. Published under the imprint of Edition Rhino, I asked Russell to clarify the difference between Kuboaa books and work produced under this new name.

Edition Rhino was founded on the desire to create larger, less expensive editions of literary materials. While these types of projects never materialized, Russell kept the name which he uses for commissions and job printing. In the year following *Songs of Ordinary Time* he published Robert Bringhurst's *Boats is Saintlier than Captains*. It was originally intended as a broadside, which he did in fact produce under the Edition Rhino name. However he was unhappy with the broadside and no one seemed interested in it. Forced to register with the Internal Revenue Service and having already received two checks made payable to Edition Rhino, he proceeded to register as Kuboaa Edition Rhino. He was very mysterious about the name's origins. Not only could he not tell me how the name came about he also could not tell me why it was a secret. I did manage to twist his arm enough for him to admit that the rhinoceros is an endangered species and their skin is surprisingly soft and supple. I think this tidbit of information only compounds the mystery.

Songs of Ordinary Time

Songs of Ordinary Time consists of poems by Mary Louise Cox and monoprints by Lou Hicks. Russell designed the book in four gatherings of three sheets each of various handmade papers. The leaves are sewn through the fold and bound in cloth-covered boards with an exposed longstitch binding. Printed in Fairbank Italic type, Russell uses the same technique that William Everson used when creating *Novem Psalterium Pii XII*. The titles and text are the same point size but distinguished by the ink color. In this case the titles are in brown and the text is in black. The monoprints were printed by Hicks with assistance of Randy Folkman. All are located on the recto except for a gatefold in the second gathering, in which the monoprint is in the center flanked by two poems. Most of the poems have short lines and all sit comfortably in the upper left-hand corner of the margins.

Man'yōshū

1996 was also the year in which *Man'yōshū* was produced. The book consists of a series of Japanese love poems written by various authors during the sixth and seventh centuries. *Man'yōshū* translates to 'ten thousand leaves' which was the size of the original work -- totaling 4,651 poems. Russell selected just a fraction of these and printed them in gray ink on handmade Abaca paper. *Man'yōshū* manipulates the stanzas by positioning them on the page around the illustrations. In form they are similar to Richard Bigus' *Ode to Typography* but Russell has succeeded in pulling off this dangerous trick. The illustrations, which refer to the infinity sign and the omega were created by Mylar templates printed in transparent ink. The short lines of these poems follow the curves and

swoops of the abstract forms thus at times, zigzagging across the page. Russell has respected the text and these manipulations do not interfere with reading and understanding the verse.

Man'yōshū is a very beautiful and quiet book. The omega in 23-karat gold is the first thing one sees when opening it. The translucency of the Abaca paper allows the text and just the shadow of the images to show through the preceding page. It was done for Sloane Madureira as a wedding gift and is the largest edition produced to date.

An Only Kid

The last book I watched Russell produce was *An Only Kid*. This book was another collaboration between Russell and Mikhail Magaril. It is tall and narrow as is *Incidents*. There are fourteen folios printed in Bruce Roger's Centaur type and printed on Rives de Lin paper in black. Magaril's monoprints are also printed in black. The pages are adhered along the length of both fore-edges and sewn through the fold. The sewn-board binding was executed by Daniel Kelm. The book is covered in Timothy Barrett's dark gray handmade paper with a matrix transfer drawing by Magaril on the front cover. The spine is leather. Kelm is a master binder and because of his masterly technique the heavy pages lay flat when opened. Although technically brilliant and beautifully printed, the cover and binding are more exciting than the contents. I have to say this is my least favorite Kuboaa work.

Current Work

Russell has not slackened his pace in the least, although when I asked him about his current projects he told me he was not really busy. Then he gave me his list. An ongoing project is *The Book of Job* to which he has been unable to dedicate much time. "It was the realization that the forms of the letters were the material and that there were none available that suited the breadth of the text. I started working on it at the end of November 1996. Since then, the study of letterforms has become my main focus. I have always been mathematically inclined & the first letters I drew were geometrically constructed. I now understand that those letters were conceptually out of line with Job -- what makes the book so powerful is Job's humanity. Anyway, now I draw constructed letters all the time -- I don't think of them as typefaces, just static forms that don't necessarily need to relate to one another. The Job typeface has undergone a couple of different incarnations so far, but I'm not showing them until I'm satisfied with the results."

He is also working on the Kronos Alphabet -- a unique alphabet hybridizing Greek and Roman forms. The alphabet and letterforms are his main focus these days although he told me he was thinking about them rather than actually producing them. His latest design is called Electic Geometric. It is composed of twenty-six letters inspired by different historic models, bordered in the ornamentation of that era. The letters will be constructed using only a compass and a straightedge. So far he has a rough design of a gothic A, and a Benevention T that he has sketched without a compass or a straightedge.

He is also working on another project with Lou Hicks, *The Passions of Sts. Perpetua & Felicity*. These third century martyrs from Carthage kept first hand accounts

of their trials and tortures while awaiting death.²⁸ This book is a reprinting of the diaries Saint Perpetua kept while she was in prison. In 1925, Stanley Morison had commissioned Eric Gill to design a typeface for the British Monotype Corporation, which he named Perpetua. Perpetua Italic was originally called Felicity after the saint imprisoned with her.

“Although it’s kind of hard to admit, I think I am much more inspired by the manuscript and lapidary traditions than the typographic model. I don’t mean calligraphy in the current sense, but the vitality of Early Christian inscriptions, eighth and twelfth century Bibles, scientific and geometric manuscripts from the Renaissance, and even tessellated letters in Italian pavements.”

Marketing

The quality of Russell’s books is indisputable but in order for him to continue he must be able to generate an income to keep producing them. Whether he pays for the production from his own pocket, as would a hobby printer, or from the sale of his works depends upon whether or not he can find an audience that is willing to collect Kuboaa titles. Born without a trust fund and not anticipating a large inheritance, he had to learn how to market his books.

When he printed *Meditation on Saviors* he had no idea how to go about finding customers for it. He knew that there would be an audience for Jeffers’ poetry if he could just find them. Perhaps he got lucky but when he called Burton Weiss in Berkeley, who had previously offered to buy the *Notebook Poems*. The dealer bought the complete edition. Weiss was the reason Russell found his first subscriber. Allen Mears collected

²⁸ Farmer, David Hugh. *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p.343-344

Robinson Jeffers and when Weiss notified him that he had a new edition of the poet's work, Mears came to see it. He has since become Russell's most comprehensive collector, buying not only his books but his ephemera and archives as well.

Thus, in the beginning, Russell relied on dealers to sell his books. He has two other subscribers. One of these subscribers is Lou Hicks. They met while he was delivering an easel she had purchased from the art store where Russell worked for a brief period. His other subscriber was student at Center for Book Arts. The New York Public Library, Yale University Library, Library of Congress, & Occidental College consistently buy his books but will not commit to a subscription. He did tell me that his list of collectors is growing by one per year.

What about a prospectus? "In general, a prospectus is useless for the kind of work I normally produce -- people need to see it and hold it before they will take a chance and buy it. Collectors will only buy from a prospectus if the book fits directly into their field of interest. I sold a couple of copies of *Elements* by the prospectus. I plan on selling a lot of copies of *Job* by prospectus (if I ever finish it)."

Peter Koch had given him names of librarians to contact directly and he has learned through trial and error which institutions can be relied upon to buy his work. Of course it depends upon a number of factors and libraries that have bought his books in the past will occasionally pass on works he is currently offering. He no longer sells his books through dealers at all and no longer publicizes an upcoming yet incomplete book. He has done this in the past and a few aborted projects have raised eyebrows among his collectors.

Roderick Cave wrote an article for the journal COUNTER exploring the idea of marketing limited editions.²⁹ Reading this essay and thinking about limited editions and private presses, I asked Russell if he was ever concerned that someone may consider him an elitist, especially since his editions are so small. "Elitism is an issue. If you print an edition of *Ulysses* that weighs thirty pounds and no one can open it, and put pretty little prints by Robert Motherwell in it & sell it for \$7500, you are an elitist. And that is fine because all of your clients will be elitist too. Nothing wrong with a private fuck club, as long as I don't have to attend the meetings. The way I look at it is simple: in order to give the content an appropriate form often requires extremely expensive materials and an indomitable amount of work. Both of which facts tend to limit the edition size (I don't have a trust fund). However, if you compare my prices to the world market, you will find that they are quite low. Martin Antonetti once remarked (I think about the *Commedia*) that it was half the price it should be [it sold for \$1600]. Sometimes I am able to make affordable books, but any one who wants one of my expensive ones can have it. I always barter or give an enormous discount on at least one copy of every book. It takes me about two years to sell an edition of ten."

²⁹ Cave, Roderick. "Privish and Perish? A Case Study of Pressbook Production in Britain between the Wars." COUNTER, no. 8 (Spring 1988), p. 16-24.

The Future

I asked Allen Mears why he continued to collect Russell's work today. "I collect Russell because I think he is the best printer for his age (meaning 28, not the century), and that he has the potential to become one of America's top printers and artists." Weiss had recommended to Mears that he continue to collect Russell's works after his initial purchase of the Jeffers poem. "[F]or the only time in our long history, [Weiss] suggested that someone, besides Jeffers, was special enough for me to collect. That someone was Russell, then only 23 years old. I bought *Meditation on Saviors*, then bought that delicate work's archive, then bought everything Russell had."

Mears believes that the security of a guaranteed income is important to an artist. Just as patrons have supported countless generations of fortunate artists throughout history, so does Mears support Russell. It is important that an artist have complete control over his work, that he not sell out because of financial straits. I believe that Russell would not sell out, even if he was only able to produce one book every five years. He supports his habit with job-printing such items as invitations, brochures, and catalogs.

Conclusion

Russell Maret is 28 years old. Why does such a young man deserve this treatment? Could it be the amazing amount of output that he has produced in the nine years since the founding of Kuboaa? Or is it because he is the newest link in the historical chain of California printers? True, he is a New Yorker by birth and by residence but his influences and his teachers are from the San Francisco Bay Area.

I think of Russell as following the California private press tradition. He may very well disagree with me as his work has evolved and will no doubt continue to define him as an important new artist in the private press arena. Allen Mears has said, "Burton [Weiss] and I believed Russell's work -- his artistry, his creativity and his exceedingly high standards of quality, made him unique among printers of his young age and endowed him with the potential to become one of America's handful of great printers. I still believe that, and one of the several reasons for that belief is that my collection, both inside and outside the realm of Jeffers, contains the work of many bona fide printing masters, and Russell's work compares favorably with theirs. Those masters include William Everson, the Grabhorns, Ward Ritchie, Peter Koch, Patrick Reagh, Lewis Allen, and Adrian Wilson, among others. Russell can become their equal and perhaps even their better."

Some people are born under the sign of a lucky star. Others have to work extremely hard to accomplish their goals. Then there are a few who position themselves so that luck can find them and all their hard work will come to fruition. Russell's lucky star is beginning to shine. Whether or not his supporters' expectation will materialize I cannot say. I know that it's been an interesting experience observing the evolution of his work. I am glad I can call him my friend.

Selected Checklist of Works

Round Midnight (1990)
Seven Poems (1990)
Meditation on Saviors (1994)
Images of a Voice (1994)
Brooklyn's Beloved Bums (1994)
Elements (1995)
Color (1995)
Noise 1 (1995)
Noise 2 (1996)
Noise 3 (1996)
Noise 4 (1996)
Incidents (1996)
The Players & Paradigms of the Commedia Dell' Arte (1996)
Man' yóshú (1996)
Songs of Ordinary Times (1996)
Boats is Saintlier than Captains (1997)
An Only Kid (1998)
The Eclipse of the Moon (1998)

Additional References

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