

Family Ties - building creative connections for New Zealand's book artists

I met with New Zealand artist Terrie Reddish during her book arts research trip to the UK this summer. Reddish is the Communications Officer for the Association of Book Crafts (New Zealand), editrix of the *ABC Newsletter* and part of the organising committee for the annual Book Crafts' Wayzgoose that will take place in Wellington in November. The Wayzgoose is now in its thirtieth year and brings together printers, printmakers, bookbinders, calligraphers, craftspeople, and book artists to showcase works by members of the Association of Book Crafts and the Association of Handcraft Printers. This year the Wayzgoose will centre around The Printing Museum | Whare Taonga Pehitanga which also happens to be the home of the Wellington Centre for Book Arts. This opened in November 2019, taking inspiration from the Book Arts Centres in Minnesota and San Francisco, USA and the London Centre for Book Arts, UK. All these centres have a rich history of utilising and teaching letterpress and bookbinding, traditional skills that have grown out of a passion for producing beautiful prints and books. The Printing Museum boasts the only Southern Hemisphere working type foundry and helps printers around New Zealand to locate all the equipment they might need and to gain access to training.

As 2023 is the 400th anniversary of the publication of the First Folio of William Shakespeare's works, 'Inkiana' Judd has printed a special letterpress edition using donated linotype from The Printing Museum. Entitled 'You Are Quoting Shakespeare', the 48-page book will be bound into miniature books by ABC members for display at the Wayzgoose. Graham (aka 'Inkiana') Judd's Inkiana Press is a letterpress studio and mobile 1833 Albion press that delivers environmentally responsible workshops to schools, colleges, libraries, exhibitions and community groups, printing letterpress type using vegetable oil-based inks on recycled papers.

Wayzgoose visitors will also be able to sign up for An Anatomy of Printing Workshop where they will typeset and print a limited edition collaborative A3 broadsheet and view historic and contemporary treasures with guidance from Sydney Shep at Wai-te-ata Press at Victoria University of Wellington | Te Herenga Waka. Sydney Shep is a Reader in Book History and The Printer, Wai-te-ata Press where, apart from undertaking extensive research into cross-cultural book history and print culture, she is also a practising letterpress printer, book artist and designer bookbinder.

Reddish, keen to establish connections between national and international book and print makers, filled me in on other news from her area:

ABC organises an annual Print + Bind collaboration between 12 letterpress printers and 12 bookbinders. Each year they choose a topic for the printers to respond to and the resulting set of prints are bound into two books per binder, who returns one to the printer.

The Print Council Aotearoa New Zealand promotes contemporary fine art printmaking through workshops, exhibitions, collaborations and exchanges between members and national and international associations. PCANZ has just launched a printmaking Pen Pals project to expand their printmaking community, make new connections and enrich members' art practices, the results of which will be exhibited virtually on their website this November. In addition to their summer and winter schools, PCANZ puts out a quarterly national newsletter to build and strengthen regional groups.

Ten years after the first Australasian bookbinding conference was held in Auckland, NZ, ABC has made a successful bid to host this biennial event in 2025, again in Auckland. Planning is already underway for BIND25 to attract not only the best overseas and local bookbinding and printing presenters but also deliver a wide range of learning experiences and networking opportunities for conference attendees. They hope that an exciting offering of in-person events will be a welcome alternative to recent years of physical disconnection during the pandemic.

Reddish feels that preserving traditional book craft skills, and their associated equipment, while adapting techniques to create contemporary artwork can be a challenge, one that is being faced by makers around the world. However, she hopes these types of collaborative activities will help to build connections and grow networks of printmakers and bookbinders, showcasing their links to each other and expanding what she calls bookcraft's 'whānau' - the New Zealand Māori term for a group of extended family, whether that be relatives or in the context of like-minded practitioners. I'm sure those family ties will be growing much wider very soon.

Association of Book Crafts (NZ) Incorporated: <https://abc-nz.org.nz/>

Association of Handcraft Printers: <https://abc-nz.org.nz/ahp/>

The Printing Museum | Whare Taonga Perehitanga: <http://www.theprintingmuseum.org.nz>

Inkiana Press: <https://www.inkianapress.co.nz>

Wai-te-ata Press: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/wtapress/>

Print Council of Aotearoa New Zealand: <https://www.printcouncil.nz>