

## Story Time

**PROFILE** Kate Bufton is known for her sculptures, but now she is exploring the representation of these works in two dimensions during a residency at Hot Bed Press, writes Sarah Bodman

Kate Bufton has been making artists' books and sculptural works from used books for the last four years. Her practice is inspired by a love of old books: 'although I am not an avid reader I find them very therapeutic to work with. My practice also involves a lot of teaching and inspiring others, and my ideas are there for others to explore too.' I caught up with her as she started work on a new summer printmaking project at Hot Bed Press in Salford, UK.

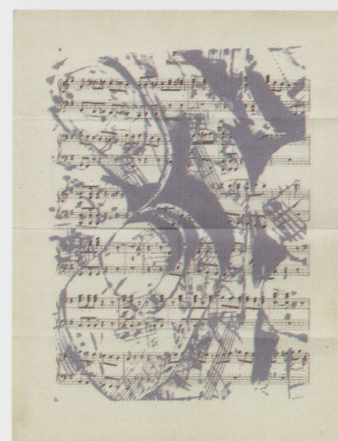
I asked Bufton about the choice of book material she uses. 'Some people donate them to me but a lot of the time I find my own books, I need to get a feel for the book and handle it before I decide to use it. I have to delve into the pages and see the book's characteristics, every book has its own personality through wear and tear, you can easily tell the difference between a book that has hardly been read to one that has been thoroughly enjoyed and loved. It's about bringing these books back to life, they have been abandoned for a long period of time and by transforming them into innovative sculptures they can once again be appreciated for their beauty. It is always the characteristics and aesthetics of old books that lure me in. The musty smells, discolouration of the pages, and their texture; all these elements make a perfect book for me to sculpt with.'

Her construction and deconstruction of books feed into each other. She says, 'I appreciate the book as a form, so I wanted to understand the making process, which I now appreciate when deconstructing a book to sculpt with. I do enjoy the sculptural element in my work as I have always been more of a hands-on maker than the elaborate thinker that printmaking requires, I am hoping that building some new skills in printmaking will bring a good balance to both aspects of my work and studio practice.'

So why now? 'My sculptures speak for themselves but I would like to create a different series of pieces that others can enjoy without having the sculpture present. The sculptures themselves can be viewed from any angle, yet I want to capture a particular point, an interesting section of the sculpture that will interest and inspire the viewer. I want to be able to create the same impact with a print as I do with my three-dimensional pieces.'

Bufton has been inspired recently by noticing particular words on the pages as she manipulates the paper to create the sculptural forms of her book works. 'I have always wanted to create a series of stories from my sculptures, as you can still see the words twisting through the pages of my sculptures I decided to make these into abstract and interesting stories through printmaking.'

Producing printed work at Hot Bed Press is a new experience for Bufton as she has little experience in printmaking processes, but her time there got off to a great start, as she explained. 'It is such a friendly environment; fellow printmakers and the technicians always support you. It's so welcoming, and considering my lack of previous experience, I have learnt so much in a small amount of time. My most successful prints have come from photo-etching so far, using an image of my work that I printed back on top of old book pages. I want to continue printing from my sculptures – I really enjoy the process of making a closed book into a three-dimensional object then taking it back to a two-dimensional print. It's a cycle that will work well for the development of my printmaking.'



Bufton is currently artist-in-residence at Fred Longworth High School in Manchester, where she has a studio space for the next academic year. Bufton spends time with the school's GCSE students in workshops, also offering tutorial sessions for students to develop their own skills in the art of paper construction. The school has recently installed new screenprinting facilities that she will be accessing as part of her residency, so I am looking forward to seeing the results of her new passion for printmaking in future book works too.

Bufton regularly exhibits at artist's book fairs in the UK, including the Manchester Artist's Book Fair organized by Hot Bed Press, where she will be showing her new book works incorporating printmaking this autumn ([www.manchesterartistsbookfair.com](http://www.manchesterartistsbookfair.com)). For information on her upcoming activities visit: [www.katebufton.co.uk](http://www.katebufton.co.uk)

### Images, clockwise from top

*Handy Gardener* (detail) 2013 Old book pages, 240 x 300 mm

*Music* 2014 Detail of sculpture, screenprint on musical manuscript, 330 x 260 mm

*Chloe* 2014 Detail of sculpture, photo-etching on old book pages with postage stamps, 210 x 297 mm