

Making friends with books

The first Cardiff Artists' Books (CAB) took place earlier this autumn at The Prinhaus studios in Cardiff. It launched a new series of future events with artists' books at The Prinhaus with a jam-packed celebration of books through displays, live music, performances by Freya Dooley, Rhiannon Lowe and Cinzia Mutigli, comic book and letterpress printing workshops and a headline performance by the Sound Book Project (www.soundbookproject.com). Cardiff and its environs has many artists working in the book format, and the socially-minded, welcoming studios of The Prinhaus was a great place to meet them. CAB exhibitors' stands showcased works by established local and regional artists including Gwion Christmas, Emily England, Chris Lloyd/kitbooks, Thomas Rolfe, Stephanie Turnbull, plus new works were shown by students at Cardiff School of Art & Design (CSAD).

Staff from the library collections at CSAD-Cardiff Metropolitan University and Special Collections & Archives at Cardiff University also attended CAB, sharing information together on their individual archives of artists' books, both of which are open to the public. At Cardiff Metropolitan's library visitors can join as a community borrower (and also follow their informative blog at: <http://csadlibrarynews.wordpress.com>). Cardiff University holds regular events promoting books to the public and holds a complete collection of Ron King's Circle Press works, (open to the public Monday – Friday see: www.cardiff.ac.uk/special-collections).

The Prinhaus was founded in 2010 by Jude Lau, Tom Whitehead and Rob Trigg, joined by Nigel Bowles soon after, as a not-for-profit, community-focused art space which serves artists and the public. The Prinhaus has a fantastic creative environment, with a large central printmaking studio surrounded by a garden, stage area, café and artists' studios. Resident artists / designers in the building also open their studios to the public for Prinhaus's regular 'Snapped Up Market' event which sees hundreds of visitors come to buy from local exhibitors and makers. For the CAB event the team even produced hand screenprinted biscuits to give out to visitors on arrival.

Prinhaus's new venture with CAB was organised by Jude Lau and Shaun James to celebrate the wealth of local activity and to spread the word about artists' books to the public. This first event's theme was 'Sound and Books', inspired by Lau's interest in the connections between the two in her own bookmaking practice. Lau has collaborated with Samuel Hasler on *Printed Matter II* (2017), a response to print through the experience of listening to compositions of recorded sounds from print studios, and her unique book with concrete covers and drum-leaf binding *If I put stones together* (2017), is a tribute to French composer, Pierre Schaeffer (1910-1995), made specially for 'turn the page' in Norwich earlier this year. Lau has also been mesmerised by the Sound Book Project who perform live at galleries and events around the UK, using books as interactive, sensory source material for musical compositions. The group was the first on her list for this CAB event having seen them perform at Oriel Davies gallery in Powys, and the theme for the day emerged in tandem with this first performance at The Prinhaus playing live with books and typewriters (you can get a flavour of their performances at: <http://bit.ly/2eQt7Um>).

Chris Lloyd of kitbooks (kitbooks.wordpress.com) launched two new editions at CAB; his satirical *Biscuitology* book discusses an A-Z of possible biscuit histories from Fig Rolls to

Bourbons, housed in a Derrida-inspired paper bookwrap, and *New Machines Coming Soon* celebrates a blend of found signage in a screenprinted mash-up of instructional manuals. The book was inspired by a handmade sign spotted in the window of a launderette in Muswell Hill, London, saying 'New Machines Coming Soon', which implied much more than the impending replacement washing machines being on their way. The book blends illustrations and texts from health and safety accident reports and manuals including the 'new EP32 Bacon Slicing machine' and the 'Podbielniak extractor machine', even a 'modern dynamo' manufactured in Cardiff.

After such a successful first event, The Printheus has put out a call for artists and the public to vote on the theme for the next CAB in September 2018, with suggestions of digital, narrative or form as topics for the event. They are also busily compiling a free resource for Cardiff and the area gathering information for regional artist's book makers on workshops, materials suppliers, bookbinders, collections and archives, and people involved in teaching book arts. The call is ongoing and new information is welcomed. To be notified of the next CAB event as an exhibitor or attendee contact The Printheus at: www.theprintheus.org