Fall 2019 Newsletter
Whoops, it’s October already?

Just going to take a moment to wipe this ink off our hands . . . there, that’s better.

BookLab has grown a great deal since we first opened the door on the third floor of Tawes, just over a year ago. Much of this growth has been in our letterpress operation: We are now a functional studio, with three tabletop presses allowing us to do poster-sized work up to 11x14” and editions of up to several hundred copies. Our ink is blue and green and gold and fuchsia (and more) as well as basic black. And we’ve greatly expanded our type collection, with drawers of classic bookface fonts like Century and Bookman suitable for chapbooks and page layouts to stylish display fonts like Bodoni and Gothic to vintage 2-inch WOOD TYPE for use with posters and broadsides. We also have a 1931 Remington typewriter, courtesy of Oliver Gaycken!

We’ve been putting all these resources to good use: Graduate and undergraduate students from Tita Chico’s classes have been printing “postmodern” reinterpretations of the broadside genre. Our graduate assistants, Mal Haselberger and Britt Starr, contributed a poster to a project organized by the Bodleian Library to collectively print the epigraphs to Moby-Dick. And it was very meaningful to us to be able to add our work to our colleague Stan Plumly’s memorial service. Under Britt Starr’s leadership, we’ve initiated a thriving Zine Club with regular monthly meetings (more about that below). We’ll also soon be launching a series of workshops, ranging from letterpress to 3D-printing and bookbinding (the first of these will be Introduction to Letterpress on the Book Beetle).
On October 25-26, we will welcome the American Printing History Association to Tawes for its annual member’s conference. The theme is *One Press, Many Hands: Diversity in the History of American Printing*. This two-day event will feature papers, workshops, film screenings, and a public keynote by Dr. Kinohi Nishikawa, author of the recent *Street Players: Black Pulp Fiction and the Making of a Literary Underground*. APHA draws members from around the country, and this is a welcome opportunity to showcase the Department’s commitments in BookLab to a national audience of scholars, artists, and print practitioners.

Beyond Tawes, BookLab is now affiliated with the Terrapin Works Makerspace Initiative, giving the Department visibility at the campus level in an area of strategic priority. At MLA, Britt Starr will represent us on the panel “The Letterpress Studio as Campus Makerspace,” bringing BookLab into conversation with print initiatives at UCSB, MIT, Case Western, Northeastern, and elsewhere; and we have had an essay on our work accepted to a forthcoming MLA volume on *Teaching the History of the Book*.

So yes, we’ve been busy. But the point is never just the printing. For us, it’s really all about the play—*serious* play, as a form of thinking and argument *in* and *with* and *through* tangible materials to find a voice that is amplified by the work of the hand. Come get your hands dirty (or inky) with us.

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**BookLab News**

**BookLab’s Newest Press: The Line-o-Scribe**

Over the summer, BookLab acquired a new press: the Line-o-Scribe Sign Machine, Model 1411. The Line-o-Scribe presses were first introduced in 1927 and were popular throughout the early 1950s; they were originally used to print signage for retail stores. The Line-o-Scribe serves as an interesting example of the printing press’s use in retail operations, as well as for understanding the different opportunities afforded by printing on a larger-scale press. Unlike the traditional platen press (like our Baltimore No. 12), the Line-o-Scribe allows for a printed area of up to 11” x 14” and is ideal for working with larger amounts of text, as well as wooden type. The press is simple to use and easy to clean—ideal for the beginner and well-seasoned printer alike.
With the University Libraries and Department of English, BookLab is very pleased to be co-host of One Press, Many Hands: Diversity in the History of American Printing, the 2019 conference of the American Printing History Association. The conference will take place Oct. 25-26 (Friday and Saturday) in Tawes Hall, and will feature a workshop by visiting artist Lynette Spencer in BookLab, keynotes by artist and printmaker Colette Gaiter and Assistant Professor of English and African American Studies at Princeton Kinohi Nishikawa (author of Street Players: Black Pulp Fiction and the Making of a Literary Underground; Chicago, 2018), film screenings, and a program of academic papers. (The latter will include talks from graduate students Mal Haselberger and Dylan Lewis, as well as from Matthew Kirschenbaum and Doug McElreth from the Libraries.) A reception will be held in BookLab following Dr. Nishikawa’s talk on Saturday evening.

This is a wonderful opportunity for us to showcase BookLab to a national audience of scholars, printers, and print historians. The conference is free to UMD English graduate students (email booklab@umd.edu for the registration code) and the keynotes are open to all. (right-click on posters for larger views)

ZineClub

After a successful Zine-making Workshop last May, BookLab is excited to have started an informal ZineClub this semester, spearheaded by GA Britt Starr. Our first gathering was well-attended (see photo documentation above) and tons of fun. Participants came from a
variety of departments, from fine arts to computer science, and ranged from undergraduates to faculty. While some attendees were old pros, others tentatively inquired, “is it pronounced ‘ZIE-NNH’ or ‘ZEEN’?” If you’re in the latter camp, it’s “ZEEN”, as in maga-zine, but notmypresident. Please enjoy a brief amateur history of zine culture below and consider joining us for our next gathering. No experience necessary. Follow @umd_booklab or refer to rotating department signage for info about the next meeting.

A brief history of “zines”! Zines are one format in a long tradition of self-publishing. Some claim Martin Luther as the original “zinester” because of his rebelliously self-circulated 1517 protest letter, “The 95 Theses,” but the history of humans seizing print technology to raise their voice in public is surely as old as print technology itself. The more commonly cited “official beginning” of zine culture is the 1930s when fans of science fiction novels wrote what we would now call “fanfiction” and exchanged these “fanzines” by mail.

In the 1970s, Punk culture breathed new life into zines. At this time, the DIY ethos of zines, the contemporaneous invention of the xerox machine, and the Punk scene’s anti-conformist/anti-capitalist sensibility converged in a perfect storm to precipitate frenzied zine activity through the ’70s and into the ’80s. In the ’90s, the riot grrrl movement arose from the embers of the Punk zine scene and led to yet another iteration of zine culture, this time with a feminist bent.

Today, zine culture is thriving once again. Even Kanye West is trying to cash in on the cache that the traditionally anti-consumerist form is gaining. (We can’t recommend Googling YEEZY zine.) “Wait,” you say, “what is a zine, though, and why the hostility?” Though the form resists definition, one could say it’s a self-made, book-like object whose form and content are open to imagination and whose usually anti-capitalist culture invites uncensored, often counter-cultural expression.

So join us at BookLab’s ZineClub to help shape the future of zine culture. Ok, maybe we’re not that big a deal (yet), but join us and have some fun making zines. We hope ZineClub will grow into a robust transdisciplinary, multi-generational, low-stakes, critical-creative recurring event where all feel welcome to experiment/play with/explore/exploit form and content through hands-on making within the medium of the DIY zine. Come play.

"'Very like a Whale': Extracts (Supplied by a Sub-Sub-Librarian), printed in 2019"

In September, BookLab GAs Mal Haselberger and Britt Starr produced a series of limited edition letterpress prints celebrating the 200th anniversary of Herman Melville’s birth. The Bodleian Bibliographical Society at the University of Oxford, Bodleian Library sent out an international call to print parts of ‘The Whale,’ better known as Moby Dick, to honor the author and his works. Mal and Britt printed one of the ‘Extracts (Supplied by a Sub-Sub-Librarian)’ on BookLab’s new Line-o-Sribe press. They used four custom ink colors, as well as collage and our type collection as stamps for the finished prints. Through January 2020, the collection of the collaborative prints will be on display (physically and digitally) in Weston Library, Oxford, UK. To learn more about the project (and the prints of the other collaborators), see the Bodleian’s description here.
Introduction to Letterpress Workshop
Wednesday, October 30 from 2-4pm

It's workshop time! On Wednesday, October 30 from 2-4pm, we're hosting an introduction to letterpress workshop—our first of the semester!! Our participants will learn to set metal type, mix custom ink, print on our press, and make a full edition of prints. The workshop has already been filled (yay!), but we'll be holding another soon if you're interested in signing up. Send us an email at booklab@umd.edu if you'd like to be put on the waitlist!

Stanley Plumly's Nostalgia

The gift of Michael Collier, BookLab is very honored to have a copy of a letterpress-printed chapbook of Stanley Plumly's poems, Nostalgia. Printed at the Zumbro River Press in La Crosse, Wisconsin in 2003, featuring original drawings by Gary Young, and dedicated to our own David Wyatt, the book consists of rewrites and reprints of a dozen of Stan's poems. "the bird grounded on one wing / before the butterfly," as the title text has it. "Truth, then beauty." This copy, one of an edition of 136, is signed by Stan. Come share it with us.
Upcoming Events
(On Campus and Beyond)

Please note: some events require pre-registration.

- **ColLABorate Friday** in the Michelle Smith Collaboratory for Visual Culture (Art-Sociology 4213), University of Maryland (*ongoing most Fridays*)
- **Capital Book Fest** on Woodrow Wilson Plaza, Washington DC NW (Thursday, October 24, from 10:00am–6:00pm)
- **Power in My Hand: Women Poets, Women Artists, and Social Change** at the National Museum for Women in the Arts (*ongoing through October 31, 2019*)
- **Miniature Shakespeare Books from the Harner Collection** at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC SE (Monday-Saturday tours at 11:00am, 1:00pm, and 3:00pm through December 31, 2019)
- **Ella’s Books: Volumes from the Library of Ella Fitzgerald** at the National Museum for African American History and Culture (*ongoing*)

Follow Us

- **Fall 2019 Hours**
  
  (Tawes 3248)
  
  Monday: 10am-5pm
  Tuesday: 12pm-5pm
  Wednesday: 1pm-5pm
  Thursday: 10am-5pm
  ...and by arrangement.

- **Twitter**: @umd_booklab
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If you have announcements, events, or ideas that you'd like to bring to our attention, please direct queries and comments to booklab@umd.edu.

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