



*Caren Florance,
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Keeping it real: letterpress as material persistence

I first encountered moveable type around the same time that I started using a computer in a workplace: the early 1990s. My skills in both progressed side-by-side throughout the years. My initial urge to print beautiful flawless books soon shifted to wanting to explore 'looser' possibilities of type and print as my computer use became more sophisticated and design-based. This paper will mix autobiography – my encounters with various presses, programs and printers – with the more theoretical ways that I have pushed my practice through a PhD and deep into visual art practice while still valuing the craft of traditional letterpress. I now see 'skilful mess' as a material strategy of resistance in the face of Artificial Intelligence.

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Dr Caren Florance is a writer, designer and academic. For about twenty years she taught book arts, typography and other subjects as a sessional staff member at the ANU School of Art and Design, the University of Canberra (UC), the National Art School and in private workshops. She is currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor at UC, where she is a visual arts mentor and advisor.

Her personal creative practice centres upon various modes of print production from informal zines to fine press letterpress and is deeply collaborative, regularly working with other writers and artists. She has published in her own name and also as 'Ampersand Duck'. She has been active in the Australian artist book community for many years, winning awards such as the Fremantle Print Award, the Northern Beaches Libraries Artist Book award and has been shortlisted for many other awards including the Libris Award and the 66th Blake Prize. She has been collected by national and international collections, including the British Library and the National Library of Australia.

She lives in Bega, NSW, Australia, deep in the Yuin Nations, where she has built her new letterpress studio.