

UNITED IN ISOLATION - AN ONLINE LETTERPRESS FESTIVAL

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SOCIAL NETWORKS/DIGITAL COEXISTENCE

Since the beginning of the millennium, (online community-orientated) social media and platforms have been steadily evolving. The establishment of Facebook in 2004 followed by Instagram in 2010 has provided two of the most valuable conduits for digital communities to date. As consumer popularity changed, memberships migrated from one platform to the next – Flickr to Twitter, Twitter to Facebook and so on. Today, audiences are presented with a broad portfolio of online networking resources. Self-broadcasting, sharing of information, and commentary and communication are commonplace. All are free at the point of use, as long as users are comfortable with the concept of digital ‘sharing’. A generation of millennials embraces open source and share-ware, financing contemporary initiatives through crowdfunding – together wherever, whatever.

Through several personal Flickr¹ accounts (a lesser-known image-sharing digital platform) established in 2008, a small online dialogue developed between Jens Jørgen Hansen (Denmark), John Christopher (UK), and Carl Middleton (UK), as well as a number of other letterpress enthusiasts. This would eventually expand into a much wider, global conversation. The focus of the initial dialogue was the contemporary culture of letterpress printing. It took place four years before the first Letterpress Workers Summit (LPW)² and eight years before the group actually met in person. Online communities like this have been gathering pace since the beginning of the internet, using the World Wide Web as a conduit for information storage and retrieval as well as, most importantly, dialogue. The United in Isolation initiative is part of this digital evolution – gathering its membership from the broadest geographies, with the Coronavirus pandemic being the unfortunate catalyst.

Even prior to the Coronavirus’ impact on movement, geography (primarily the cost of travel / accessing time away from employment, etc.) contributed negatively to many physical networking

opportunities. Solutions like ‘video-link up’ or contributing ‘by post’ have been some of the most sustainable solutions.

In different instances during the past two decades ‘call-outs’ were made on-line for contributions. Letterpress practitioners curating exhibitions and events were searching for experimental works beginning to push the envelope within the discipline. Thereafter, letterpress works were composed, printed, packaged and posted, which facilitated several internationally contributed exhibitions and symposiums. These included:

- Reverting to Type: an exhibition of contemporary letterpress practitioners held at Standpoint Gallery, London. It showcased how the centuries-old craft of letterpress is being reinvented by progressive practitioners (2010). Curated and facilitated by the New North Press.
- Letterpress of Pray: Takuma Nakagawa (Bluemoon Letterpress, Japan) organised a touring exhibition of letterpress work with the total proceeds benefitting orphans of the tsunami (2011).
- Type Impressions: an international exhibition of new trends in the art of letterpress held at the Danish Museum of Media in Odense, Denmark (2011). Curated by Keith Bassford and Jens Jørgen Hansen.

The contributors to these three exhibitions helped to facilitate an ongoing international conversation helping to qualify and propel the relevance of letterpress printing in a digitally-dominated environment.

Today, it is recognised that access to online platforms provides some of the most valuable tools in networking and perpetuating the digital community of letterpress printers. The United in Isolation initiative formed in 2020 was preceded by a slow build of these important digital networks.

¹ Flickr is an American image hosting and video hosting service, as well as an online community. Like Slack or Whatsapp, it has chat rooms organised by topic, private groups and direct messaging capabilities. <https://www.flickr.com/>

² Letterpress Workers (LPW) was established in 2012 by Officina Tipographica Novepunti. It is a short-term collaborative artist residency where letterpress workers from Europe and the Americas work together to share knowledge, cultural approaches and ways of thinking (not only about letterpress). <https://letterpressworkers.org>

DOI number:

CORONAVIRUS: THE CATALYST

In the first few months of 2020, experiencing some form of household lockdown had become a common, global phenomenon. This resulted in higher-than-normal levels of access across all platforms of social media. In the UK alone time spent on social media increased by up to 72%. Most adults spent between one and four hours per day accessing a range of platforms. The two most popular were WhatsApp⁴ (up by 75%) and Facebook (up by 70%). Both platforms were used for conversation-based messaging. YouTube, the third highest platform accessed (up by 54%) was primarily used for video education/entertainment.

At that time, any platform which afforded a wider avenue for discourse (helping to alleviate sensory boredom) had a newly increased value. There was a need for a two-way 'live' dialogue beyond what was already available – a different online immersive experience. Perhaps this lack was a catalyst for some individuals to take action.

Over ten weeks in 2020, a cohort of international letterpress practitioners unlocked their doors and invited the public in for a digital 'private view' of their workshops, that is, a personally curated tour of presses, type collections, hand-printed works and the materials which influence and inspire them. This was to evolve into Series One of the United in Isolation online initiative – a weekly live-streaming event, broadcasting on Facebook between the 18th of April and the 20th of June.

The idea for United in Isolation was first conceived by Andrea Brekke, a printmaker, illustrator and educator based in Oslo, Norway, in response to the emerging Corona crisis and the impact he felt it was having upon a worldwide creative community (specifically letterpress printers). In early March 2020, Andrea published a 'call-out' on his Instagram feed. It read:

Printmakers, artists, photographers, graphic designers, illustrators, students of the aesthetic arts, fellow visual workers of the world. We are now witnessing something we haven't seen before. Communities are shut down, borders are closed, people are isolated. We have two options. 1: To turn our backs on each other, or 2: To finally realise that we are all connected and that we need to pull together. I call on you to share your vision under the hashtag #unitedinisolation. If you do, it will be grand. If you don't, I will look like an idiot. Who wants to join me?

The message resonated with a large number of people, not only his close friends but a much wider global community, personally navigating their way through the impact of the Coronavirus. Large numbers of creatives were working remotely and trying to navigate an environment subject to travel restrictions and limited physical human contact.

Elettra Scotucci, Andrea Vendetti (Slab Press, Italy), Myrna Keliher (Expedition Press, USA) and Sergei Besov (Partisan Press, Russia) were the initial respondents. Andrea Torres (Tipo Móvil, Chile) and Carl Middleton (Studio B, UK) rapidly followed, completing the team.

⁴ WhatsApp (Messenger) is an internationally available American freeware, cross-platform-centralised instant messaging service. <https://www.whatsapp.com/>

It was understood that some people would not be comfortable accessing Facebook as sharing platform (on both political and technical grounds). There was definitely tension about the instrumentation of social media. Simultaneously, social media (specifically Facebook and Twitter) were being used by the state internationally to present alternative visions of reality as truth using people's anger as a popular engine (ref. Donald Trump), juxtaposed to lavish, unsustainable modes of being (ref. Kardashians). The United in Isolation team needed to identify a platform to sustainably broadcast from. They were very aware that there were already active dialogues taking place within private 'groups' on Facebook (dedicated to letterpress printing). Therefore, small efforts directed at marketing a prospective audience were already in existence and could be redirected to a new dedicated 'group'. Linking these groups with the team's personal networks, there was hope that the initiative could generate a comfortable audience for each presentation.

From the outset, the United in Isolation directive was to be an inclusive entity – weekly meetings should not be dominated by geography or gender; in fact, scheduling needed to represent the widest spectrum of letterpress printers from the broadest range of categories. The team searched their personal networks to find speakers in countries including Sweden, Argentina, the USA, Denmark, South Africa, Uruguay, Russia, the UK, Japan, Chile, Spain, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Australia and Pakistan – language was not going to be a barrier, with team members helping to translate dialogue when needed.

Collating, managing and directing a programme of informal presentations was a totally voluntary process. Behind the scenes, a set of promotional texts were composed, a Facebook platform and testing site were established, a brand was developed, a database was configured, and guidelines for speakers were written and distributed. None in the team could know how the initiative would actually function, who would be comfortable to present and what audience would be interested enough to 'tune in'. The team simply hoped it would be a valuable endeavour and, if nothing else, help pass the time more enjoyably than without it.

The first week's presentations included Myrna Keliher and Sergei Besov. For several people outside the team (their personal and professional friends) it was reported to be very emotional to see their faces on-screen and hear them articulate after such a long silence. For others who were navigating their own personal 'lockdown', the presentations provided a welcome interruption to many weeks of solitude.

As well as being prominent forces within the United in Isolation team, Keliher and Besov are both attendees of the LPW in Italy, an annual physical event which brings together a large community of letterpress printers, a high proportion of attendees being lone or remote workers. Earlier in the year, it was reported that the 2020 LPW event would not be happening. For the majority of the LPW attendees, it is the highlight

of their calendar and the single opportunity to physically interact as a community. Italy was one of the first European countries struggling to navigate the alarming rate of Coronavirus cases in the country. Its response was to enforce harsh levels of 'lockdown' with few or no international visitors afforded entry into the country.

The international lockdown in early 2020 provoked a flurry of email correspondence between LPW members discussing how they were personally navigating the restrictions and what direct implications it was having on their daily lives. This consisted mainly of direct one-to-one email communications, a few telephone calls and some postal, letterpress greetings. There had been no multi-person or group dialogues, only a limited number of textual conversations using the Slack³ mobile telephone platform.

Globally, movement and access restrictions afforded very few opportunities for shared physical experience. No LPW, cancelled print fairs and therefore no physical meetings taking place at all in 2020 made the United in Isolation presentations a new conduit for dialogue, a poignant and valuable community platform helping to participate in the shared global experience of Coronavirus (Fig. 1).

THE LOGISTICS OF AN ON-LINE COMMUNITY

After initial discussions with the United in Isolation team around wellbeing, the majority of other dialogues focussed primarily on planning, scheduling and the logistical delivery of each screening, ensuring the technology of the platform functioned and delivered as seamlessly as possible. There had been no prior consideration or conversation relating to the emotional impact a 'digital arrival' of an online audience would have, or where simultaneously each audience member would access the platform, 'sign in' and locate their digital presence alongside fellow audience members to experience the event together or at least virtually together.

At the first screening, whilst the audience 'signed in' (within the live comments portal), it became evident that distant friends were saying a virtual 'hello' to each other possibly for the first time since the arrival of the Coronavirus, a digital embrace and a collective stepping out of isolation. As the initiative grew and gained momentum, large numbers of people reported that they had begun to depend heavily on the broadcasts. It helped them punctuate the week. Prior to that, one of the seven days had seamlessly merged into the next. It helped to define each Saturday and qualify that it was the weekend, something to look forward to and cherish in a time devoid of much celebration.

A further element which had not been planned during the development of the initiative was the evolution of the break-out 'after parties', as they became known. Once the audience realised that the interface to the video and audio link was easy to navigate, they scheduled their own meetings and discussions, responding to what they had just seen. These break-out sessions were much less formal, more social events



Figure 1

³ Slack is a proprietary business communication platform. It offers many IRC-style features (Internet Relay Chat is a network of internet servers that use a specific protocol through which individuals can hold real-time online conversations via personal computers and other devices). It includes persistent chat rooms organised by topic, private groups and direct messaging. <https://slack.com/intl/en-gb/>

Figure 1: United in Isolation.

continuing the dialogue and reinforcing a much wider ‘togetherness’. One focused community-led dialogue developed into a much wider creative and entertaining narrative.

The facility to ‘live stream’ was already embedded within the framework of Facebook’s platform, yet limited numbers of people knew it was there, and fewer knew how to actually navigate it. It afforded the ability to video call (through built-in cameras on computers or smartphones) or text-chat, the only constraint being that each recipient held a Facebook account. The technology was embraced by the United in Isolation initiative’s need – it was only a matter of learning the system, testing its use and mentoring presenters week by week prior to each live broadcast.

It became apparent during the presentations that the work people were producing had a definitive undercurrent of both creative and political expression. Presenters were writing, designing and printing a commentary on Coronavirus as well as other political topics including climate change, ecology, race equality and gender issues. Perhaps in a time when the barrage of digital communication (television/internet) had begun to drown our rational sensibilities, the printed word provided a different, more clarified message. Rozemarijn Oudejan’s (Studio Zeedauw) work ‘Stay the fuck home’ resonated with so many – the audience, all contemplating the same issue but possibly afraid to actively respond, were afforded a bright analogue voice (Fig. 2).



Figure 2

At a halfway point through Series One of the presentations, international news reports documented the brutal killing of George Floyd in America by a Minneapolis police officer. This act resulted in global protest and, as expected, printed responses using letterpress. For a moment, Coronavirus was upstaged by a more important directive, that of ‘Black Lives Matter’. To hear Rick Griffith (Matter, USA) describe the necessity to bond his posters to a wooden handle (so he could hold a poster with one hand and defend himself with the other) as a form of self-defence in preparation for a peaceful protest was politically charged – providing an insight to how ‘having a voice’ as a black man in America could be a dangerous thing in itself (Fig. 3).



Figure 3

What would remain after ten weeks of production was the beginning of a global video archive into contemporary letterpress practice, a contemporary digital insight into a very analogue passion, from garden sheds and converted bedrooms through bespoke spaces housing important artefacts mapping the evolution of communication. Redundant stock, out-of-date machinery and scrap is how some people describe the collections – to its owners it evokes a dangerous passion, some might even call it an obsession. To date, the initiative has helped complete printing presses, re-homing missing components, foster both local and national links (one presenter being introduced to fellow printers unknown to them in their own city) and helped to provide a conduit for discussion, debate and the sharing of knowledge.

United in Isolation had helped to re-link hands, embrace both existing and newly found acquaintances and re-engage a dialogue which the

Figure 2: Rozemarijn Oudejan - Zeedauw.

Figure 3: Rick Griffiths - Matter.

Coronavirus, influence and constraints at times had tried to silence. Perhaps Coronavirus (whatever shape or form it may take) should be thanked for this – it has enabled the community of letterpress printers to grow incrementally. And there is some comfort to be had in the knowledge that the practice of letterpress printing is valued and safe within the hands of such a diverse group of people across the globe.

The United in Isolation initiative experienced a fraternity without boundary or prejudice at a time when social media (with the wrong directive) was helping to propel disparate groups to spread negativity in relation to 'difference'. The initiative intuitively welcomed and in turn celebrated difference. Both LPW and United in Isolation have always been the most inclusive of communities and ones of which so many contributors are very proud to be part. The only conflict is focussed on process and not personality – which way to grip a roller is a very controversial topic.

As time passed and inoculation programmes were 'rolled out' (one country at a time), restrictions were lifted and communities welcomed the return of free movement. At this point, the team came virtually together (through yet another Zoom conversation) to discuss the relevance of the title 'United in Isolation', and elected a shift toward a wider focussed alignment, that of 'Letterpress United'. Thereafter the programme would be renamed and a new chapter would begin.

Each week the audience numbers would vary, most presentations gaining between one to three thousand views (combining the live screening and the following viewings within the United in Isolation archive). In total, the whole initiative would amass over 45,000 views.

LETTERPRESS UNITED / FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Historically, the origins of letterpress printing lie in the need to impart information – originally with a primary philosophical and religious agenda, later focussed on broader activities and events. By definition, the process is laboriously slow, and at times decoration and flamboyance in design are disregarded as a time-saving option.

Today, this approach has a contemporary accuracy, enabling a global methodology for the production of politically charged letterpress works – 'spell it out and print it big'. Single-colour graphic treatments limited in styling and typographic flamboyance are an informal visual linkage across a range of graphic freedoms of expression. Letterpress poster design occupies a unique position. Although sometimes it is used as a commercial device, its content more often relates to a social or cultural concern or is connected to a significant event.

On Thursday 24th February 2022, Russia elected to engage its military forces and invade the adjacent country of Ukraine. It was a political act that would set the world in motion debating why this could happen and what its political motivation and direction could be. Protests against this act of war began immediately as the news was received across the globe. In most countries, the ability to protest against the broadest

of issues has always been a human right. But today in Russia, where any activity in which the management of the state is questioned or opposed, these acts are punishable by up to fifteen years in prison (Fig. 4)

Today, the true meaning of the phrase 'Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one'⁵ (often seen set and presented as a light-hearted aphorism with a directive focussed on the rarity of owning your own printing press) translates into a different, much darker message. Touring a tiny Moscow letterpress workshop (Partisan Press) which houses one small tabletop press and two cases of Cyrillic wooden type, the owner (Sergei Besov) testifies that it was very difficult to establish a letterpress-print workshop in Russia. Most of the mechanics of the Russian printing industry had been dismantled long ago. The political agenda in Russia has always driven the freedom of expression to the margins. And where the mechanical freedom of expression has crossed party lines, these mechanics have been eradicated, politically ensuring that any voice other than that of the government would not have a conduit to broadcast.

During a peaceful 'anti-war' process in Moscow, Besov was arrested and cautioned, details were recorded, and a future court appearance was lodged. On further investigation, the authorities asserted that his hand-printed posters were subversive and qualified as anti-Soviet propaganda. His small print studio accommodating two cases of wooden type was deemed 'dangerous' to the state. Following a visit from the police, access to the workshop's contents was to be restricted thereafter.

Independent letterpress workshops in Russia are rare. Even before the Russian revolution (1917), printing presses were destroyed in a process to aid the reduction of the production of any form of information (pro- or anti-state). But who could predict that in 2022 two cases of wooden type would need to be removed from a small print workshop, sealed in plastic containers and buried to avoid their destruction! This is the process the owner had to take to ensure that 'freedom of the press' continue and is granted to future generations – not from a historic perspective but simply to afford someone in the future the ability to have 'a voice'.

Two years after Besov's initial presentation for United in Isolation, his work resonates with a much different, darker tone. The political impact of his work immediately increased exponentially, and the danger of its production carried a severe sentence. Whilst previously his work proposed the simple statement 'think about what is important to do' (specifically fly-posted in clear sight of the commuter traffic in Moscow), today (for some in authority) it holds a dangerous propaganda directive.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was a different catalyst for United in Isolation, newly titled 'Letterpress United Team' to come together again to discuss what their response would be to Russia's activity in Ukraine. It was concluded to 'call out' for the most basic of responses – black ink



Figure 4

⁵ Article: 'The Wayward Press: Do You Belong in Journalism'; printed in The New Yorker magazine in 1960. Written by A. J. Liebling.

The best thing Congress could do to keep more newspapers going would be to raise the capital-gains tax to the level of the income tax. (Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one.) There are irresistible reasons for a businessman either to buy or to sell, and anybody who owns the price of a newspaper nowadays must be a businessman.

Figure 4: Sergie Besov - Partisan Press.

on white paper 'No to War' in the language of those who produced it. The team composed a much longer 'call-out' than the original looking for a different kind of confrère response.⁶

To date, the resulting response has bought over a hundred letterpress posters, printed in over twenty different languages. A community voice with a single message qualifies the makers' status as being definitively anti-war. There is little dialogue between posts, just a unifying 'thumbs up' recorded in the comments section. An international gesture of value, digitally posted and emotionally recognised (Fig. 5).

Each day, social media platforms publish unquantifiable volumes of information, detailing the everyday lives of ordinary people. Some are political, but the majority are ordinary and benign. The United in Isolation initiative embraced and manipulated what they determined as the most successful components the Facebook platform had to offer, stepping beyond the complex political directives that Mark Zuckerberg and his team elect to follow. The initiative took the best from a questionable platform and provided a series of inclusive short productions, entertaining a larger than previously envisaged number of people at a moment when people's emotional state was at a very low point. The resulting broadcasts helped propagate and propel a valuable dialogue relating to the contemporary application of letterpress printing. It celebrated both the smallest and largest relationships to the craft with similar conviction. The legacy after ten weeks of production is still active and viewing numbers continue to grow. The initiative was 'of its time' and stands as a valuable record of international community participation – sharing with conviction, energy and empathy for the good of all those involved.

WITH THANKS TO:

United in Isolation Team: Sergei Besov, Andrea Brekke, Myrna Keliher, Carl Middleton, Elettra Scotucci, Andrea Torres, Andrea Vendetti.

And the presenters:

Elettra Scotucci & Andrea Vendetti - Slab Press. Italy.
 Phil Gambrill - Fresh Lemon Print. Australia.
 Sergei Besov, Demon Press / Partisan Press. Russia.
 Myrna Keliher - Expedition Press. USA.

.....
 Peter Duffin & Sam Larson - Animales de Lorca.Valencia. Spain.
 Judith Berliner & Ethan Cameron - Full Circle Press. USA.
 Aleksandra Stępień - Poland.
 Ane Thon Knutsen - Norway.

.....
 Carl Middleton - Studio B. UK.
 Jens Jørgen Hansen - Bogtrykker. Denmark.
 Veronica Bassini - Anonima Impressori. Italy.
 Rodrigo Cuberas - Argentina.

.....



Figure 5

⁶ See page 9

Figure 5: Justin Knopp - Typoretum.

Nestor Ljutjuk - Labora. Estonia.
Vida Sačić – USA.
Mitsunobu Hosoyamada - Letterpress Letters. Japan.
Thomas Gravemaker - Letterpress Amsterdam. Netherlands.
Sandro Berra - Tipoteca Italiana. Italy.
.....
Rozemarijn Oudejans - Studio Zeedauw. Netherlands.
Lars Amundsen & Matthias Beck - Tipos en su tinta. Canary Islands.
Michael Hephher - Clawhammer Press. Canada.
Andrea Torres - Tipo Móvil. Chile.
.....
Luise Valentiner - Trigger Press. Scotland.
Gabriel Pasarisa - Caja Baja. Uruguay.
Amy Redmond - Amada Press. USA.
Salman & Kamran Ghani – A1 Block & Letterpress. Pakistan.
.....
Martin Ciolkosz - Impressed. South Africa.
Graham Bignell - New North Press. UK.
Martina Vincenti - La Tipografia Toscana. Italy.
Jorge Lar - Prelo Prints. Denmark.
.....
Armina Ghazaryan - Letterpress Corner. Belgium.
Rick Griffith - Matter. USA.
Federico Cimatti - Prensa La Libertad. Argentina.
Katherine Anteney - UK.
.....
Lina Nordenström - Grafikverkstan. Sweden.
Stephanie Carpenter & Jim Moran - Hamilton Wood Type & Printing
Museum. USA.
Danitza del Carpio - Letra Imprenta. Peru.
Eva Lebens - In My Back Yard. Netherlands.
.....
Ben Blount - Make. USA.
Alejandra Portilla de Tirado - 30 Dedos. Mexico.
Marcos Mello - Oficina Tipográfica São Paulo. Brazil.
Andreas Brekke – Norway.

FOOTNOTE 6 (CONT. FROM PAGE 8):

⁶ *As a Letterpress United team, we decided to launch a call for anti-war posters to involve letterpress printers from all over the world.*

The events of these days in Ukraine are just the latest regarding the use of war as an extreme tool of oppression, and since they are happening in a Western country, they are more covered by the media. Way too often, however difficult it is to see it at times, conflicts are not so much about nations or peoples as about a wider political and economic vision that divides the world between the untouchable and the defenceless. It is always the weakest who pay the price for this distorted vision, to the benefit of a handful of people who expand their economic influence in an uncontrolled manner. We are tired of this and frightened by the possible scenarios that could open up.

Some of us have already expressed ourselves individually on these issues, but what pushed us to act collectively and systemically was the arrest of a Russian friend of ours for printing and distributing anti-war posters. He has now been released, but we fear that his troubles have only just begun (for this reason we are not involving or tagging him directly). This is something we cannot accept in any way. Freedom of expression, carried out through a poster or in any other way, is inalienable, and cannot be attacked. This is one of the main reasons why we turn to our community, to bring solidarity to anyone who is having difficulty expressing their ideas.

We are perfectly aware of the contradictions that can arise from this kind of initiative. We know that printing a poster only to put it on social networks, as noble as it may seem in this context, makes little sense: we are seeing photos and videos that, unfortunately, make us think more directly. Mitigating our sense of powerlessness with actions that do not have a real impact on the world does not interest us. Beauty alone will not save the world – we need concrete actions. With this call-out, we want to avoid focusing on ourselves as individuals and our personal expression that, as such, has limits. What we wish to emphasise with this action, on the contrary, is the presence of a real community that can try to respond, with a voice at the same time unique and plural, in a united way to the problems that society presents us, demonstrating our existence and our point of view clearly and understandably. We want to make our voice heard clearly on the collective theme of freedom of expression and the rejection of war.

Exactly as in the case of the pandemic, each of us printers is living in a different situation, and this will change over time. In this context, a plural response, able to cross borders whilst maintaining the same simple and fundamental message, acquires more value, bringing out the solidarity that for us is fundamental. We also feel strongly that it is important for us to show solidarity in all of our own languages, so that we are involving our home communities and saying, literally in every language possible, that war is not acceptable anywhere in the world. In addition, to try to bring more of our demands to a real level, we encourage any concrete action that may arise from the posters of this call, such as fundraising, sticking posters in the streets and distributing a digital and printable version for free.

In order to keep this response as unified and collective as possible, and to maintain coherence with what is written above, we invite you to print a poster using black ink with “no to war” printed in your own language, with your name or press name and location if you feel safe to add that info. We will collect images of all of these posters and try to spread them as much as possible, witnessing a collective response of printers around the world to the issues expressed above. To submit, email a photo of your print and your name, press name, and place to: letterpress.united@gmail.com. We will post everything to our Instagram and Facebook pages; please include your IG handle so we can tag you. If you are sharing content related to this topic, remember to tag [@letterpressunited](#) and use the hashtags [#letterpressunited](#) and [#notowar](#). We welcome any size; it doesn't have to be big. There is no deadline. We are a team of volunteers and will continue posting as long as we can.

From our hearts to yours, thank you. Grazie. Gracias. Takk.

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Carl Middleton is a designer, printmaker, artist, and academic. His commercial work is sited within the disciplines of graphic arts - spanning graphic design, information design, letter arts with a focus on typography, brand identity and communication.

After completing a master's degree at London College of Printing in 'typo/graphic studies' he began combining his creative practice with teaching. He has lectured widely on typography, design history and communication at institutions including: London College of Communication, University of East London, Royal College of Art, University of Reading. He has researched, written and validated a number of contemporary degree programmes of study within the umbrella of design. Since 2017 he has contributed to the Letterpress Workers Summit (LPW) - an annual short term artist residency in Milan of letterpress workers (printers, typographers, designers, calligraphers, artists) from Europe and the Americas. A contemporary dialogue focussed on the application of historic analogue processes being sustainably practiced in a digitally dominated age.

Memberships: Association of European Printing Museums (AEPM) / Oxford Guild of Printers

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Presented at IMPACT 12 Conference, Bristol, The Printmakers' Voice,
21-25 September 2022 UK

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IMAGE GALLERY



Figure titles and information

Figure 1: United in Isolation

Figure 2: Rezemarijn Oudejan - Zeedauw.



Figure 3: Rick Griffiths - Matter.

Figure 4: Sergie Besov - Partisan Press.



Figures 5: Justin Knopp - Typoretum.