

# TRYCKT OUT

REINTRODUCING TRADITIONAL PRINTING TO CONTEMPORARY GRAPHIC DESIGN IN SWEDEN

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# HDK

# TRYCKT OUT

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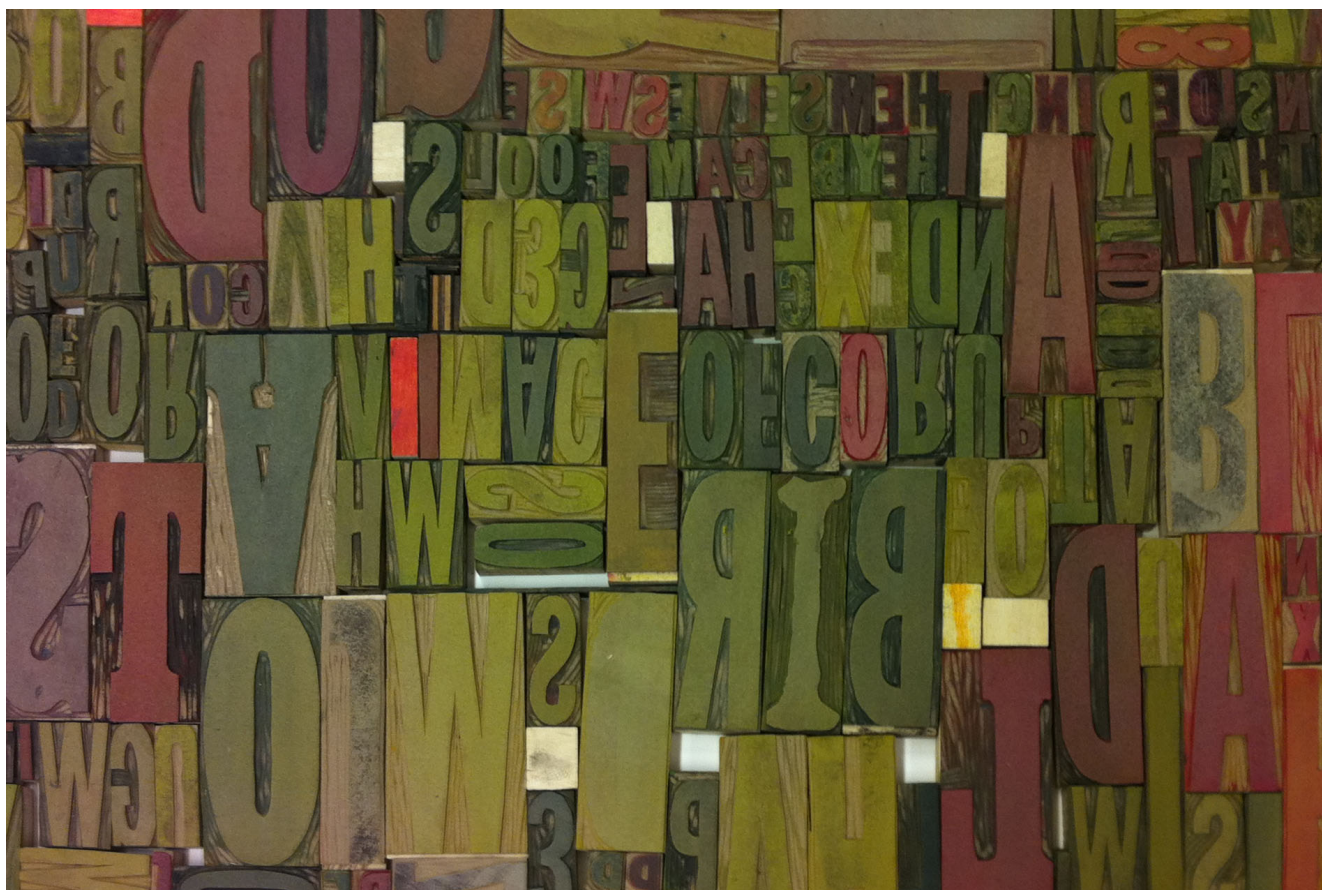
# TRYCKT OUT

## ABSTRACT

For over 500 years, the act of printing required the skill and knowledge of how to use a press. Printers and typographers created their works using actual materials, heavy and tangible, and some of their products have lasted centuries. Yet, as printing methods made revolutionary advances, this long-standing standard of printing virtually vanished from the informational graphic world. In Sweden, graphic designers are working almost exclusively from a computer base and the discipline of traditional print and typesetting has been lost. TRYCKT OUT is a project and study built to raise awareness of the vitality and viability of traditional print for graphic design within a contemporary context. The supposition of the project is that, in the march of progress, important knowledge has been discarded, resulting in a cheapening for both the product and producer.

## SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING

I över 500 år, handlingen att tryckning krävs skicklighet och kunskap om hur man använder ett pressmeddelande. Tryckare och typografer skapade sina verk ur verkliga material, tunga och konkreta, och vissa av deras produkter har pågått i århundraden. Men som tryckmetoder gjort revolutionerande framsteg, detta långvariga standard för utskrifter praktiskt taget försvunnit från informativa grafiska världen. I Sverige är grafiska formgivare som arbetar uteslutande från en dator och skicklighet tryckning och sättning har förlorats. TRYCKT OUT är ett projekt och studie byggd för att öka medvetenheten om livskraft och hållbarhet hos traditionella tryckta för grafisk design i ett samtida sammanhang. Antagandet av projektet är att i mars framsteg, har viktiga kunskaper tagits bort, vilket resulterar i en billigare för både produkten och producent.





## Intro

When I first moved to Sweden in 2002, I was surprised to find no evidence of traditional printing in the graphic design. Specifically, in the concert posters I would see hanging around Gothenburg. I had grown accustomed to seeing hand-made work of this type, as the practice is fairly prevalent in my home country. Prior to moving, I was quite aware of the prevalence of Sweden's music scene, so I was puzzled that its corollary, the handmade, do-it-yourself poster, was strangely absent. Instead, these posters and prints appeared to be produced exclusively on the computer and output digitally. Though the imagery and design was at times masterful, the product seemed cheapened largely by being output either digitally or high-run offset. This was especially true of work that could have easily been hand-made, either by screenprint or letterpress. Function seemed to be outweighing form.

I found it so odd that hand-printed graphic design work would be absent in Sweden. From what I knew of the country's proclaimed values; quality over quantity, environmental concern, and craftsmanship, it seemed that hand-made print would naturally be a common aspect of the culture. Though, it seemed to fit the sensibility, I was caught unaware by the extent to which Sweden had discarded the tradition of print in favor of modern advances.

At that time, as now, I saw a great gap and opportunity for graphic designers to rediscover the practice, discipline, and possibilities of traditional printing. Having witnessed it work and thrive in my own country in the midst of the same technological advances, I have always believed that the same could be true in Sweden. For this to happen, it would be essential to create an awareness of the practice and its possibilities, to say, "Hey! This is possible! You can do this!". This has been the thrust of my studies in the HDK Master's program and of the resulting project, TRYCKT OUT.





## Background

In 1450, Johannes Gutenberg devised an invention that would revolutionize communication in the western world and help usher in the modern world. Though extremely slow and tedious in relation to today's production, Gutenberg's moveable type printing press allowed for the production of the word to be created and disseminated on a grand scale. The premise was simple; characters cut in reverse, either from wood or cast in metal, set in a readable form, laden with ink, and then pressed on paper. Repeatable action meant that the printed work could be made innumerable times. The result was an explosion in communication and distribution of knowledge throughout the burgeoning renaissance world.

For the next 450 years, the basic mechanics and processes of printed work remained the same, with the groups that created the work becoming guilded. Then in 1903, Ira Washington Rubel invented the offset method of printing, by accident. Forgetting to load a first sheet of paper into the press, Rubel instead printed on the rubber cylinder. As he ran the paper through, he found that the print resulting from a rubber roller was more crisp and distinct than that directly from metal. As clarity had always been a goal for which printers strived and customers desired, offset printing eventually superseded relief printing to become the standard for printing as we know today.

## Advancement and Decline

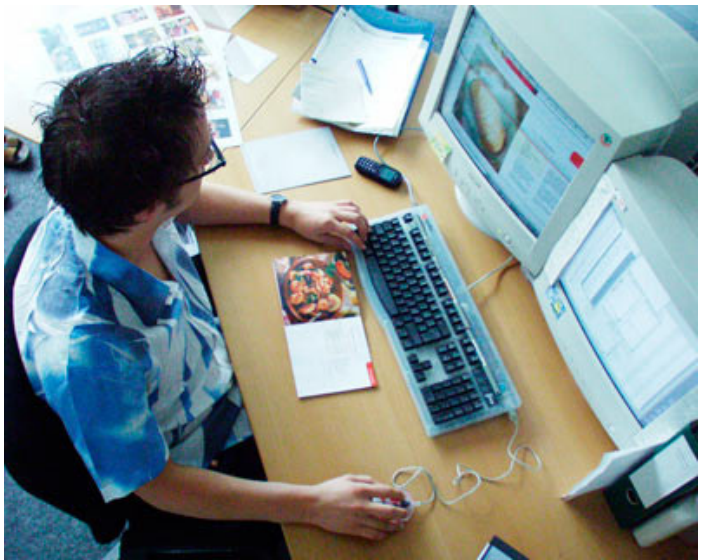
From the time of Rubel's accident, the means by which print is adhered to surfaces accelerated at a maddening pace. Screen-printing, xerography, flexography, ink-jet, and

laser printing all made a stake in how print work may be executed. Each step forward has made printing become more feasible for the average consumer and producer. Today, the act of printing is regarded a rather effortless and mundane task for most, whittled down to a simple keystroke; Ctrl + P. The downside of this ease-of-use, beyond the decrease in infrastructure, knowledge, practice, and product with traditional printing, is the loss in the value of printing itself.

Further, with the onset of electronic communication (email, SMS, web-interactivity, mobile phone apps, social media, etc.), print itself has become endangered. In the last couple decades, much has been made about the "death of print" in reference to the high number of print magazines and newspapers that have either ceased printing and gone directly to web-only format or have folded altogether. A direct correlation could be made between the rise of electronic communication and the decline of print media. It makes sense if one takes the position that the core value of print is as a conduit of information, that if the same information could be transmitted in a less expensive and more far-reaching format, that print, however output, would be less relevant.



This is the climate in which graphic designers are currently working, one in which a key component of the discipline has been downgraded to near non-essential. Hence, the knowledge base from which a graphic designer creates work has shrunk and, likewise, the variety of formats available has become more standardized. Many people who currently claim the title "graphic designer" know very little about the mechanics of graphic design, including printing. No fault of their own, this knowledge has become increasingly unnecessary as the tools for production have continued to become more formatted, easy to use, and understand. Both the producer and the consumer have become acquainted and grown familiar to the changes in the current media environment.



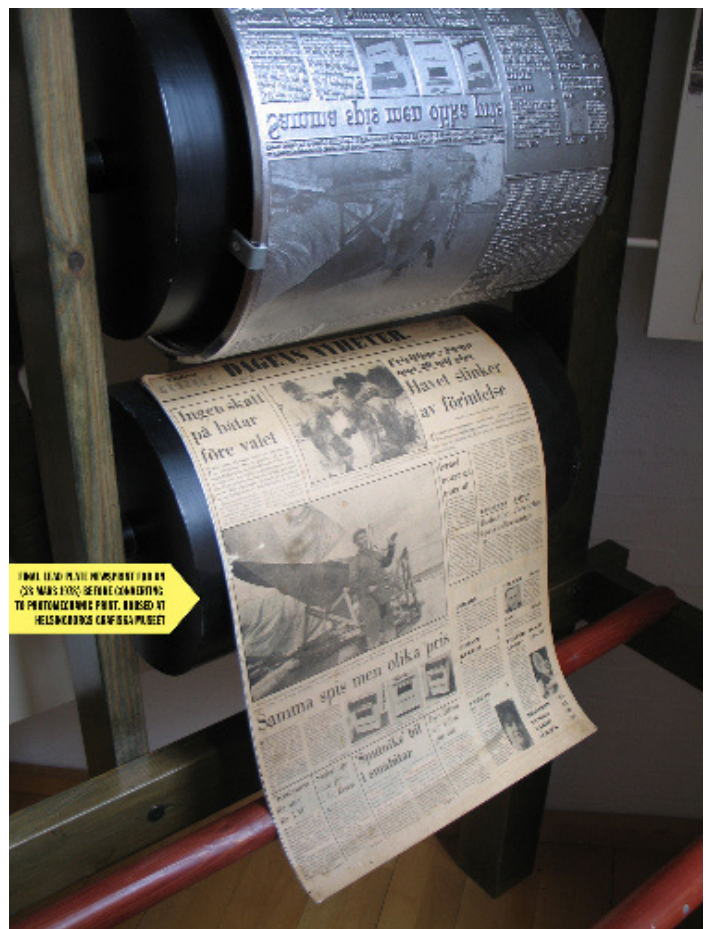
It is unsurprising, then, that a graphic designer working in these conditions would be excited, or at least intrigued, by the possibility of creating work in a traditional manner, if available. One of the hallmarks of an actual designer is a drive to make things, and for one working in graphics, the opportunity to make tangible and unique work is indelible. Yet, if the means of production are not apparent, available, or even known, then the possibility for the graphic designer to choose to work in a traditional manner is non-existent. The conditions in Sweden fit this description

## Sweden

In the mid to late 20th century, Sweden made a near-universal change from typeset lead printing to electronic printing. In 1959, Sweden published its first book with a photo-mechanical system (A.J. Lerner's *My Fair Lady*, Bonniers) and in the spring of 1978, DN switched completely over to photo-mechanical printing from plate printing. Swedish printers and typographers were now out of a job (Det Tryckta Ordet, 1986).

This transformation in printing in Sweden mirrors that of other countries worldwide, yet the grassroots of individuals salvaging the machines and type to keep producing work has not caught fire into any kind of revival in traditional printing in Swedish graphic design. Certainly there are several artists in Sweden whose work is largely in printed work, but scant little in the way of

informational, typeset work. Traditional print has become the domain of artists rather than designers, whose natural habitat is now in front of a keyboard and monitor. The knowledge and accessibility of traditional print has been lost to designers in Sweden.





Having come to Sweden from a culture in which the practice of traditional hand-made print in graphic design has been reignited, its absence here was immediately apparent. On the one hand it was puzzling and saddening that designers had relegated themselves to a standardized format. On the other hand, it was extremely exciting that the reinvestigation of traditional print had yet to occur and how full of potential the future could be for graphic design in Sweden.



As industry was moving on to the latest in printing technology, traditional presses were silenced, left to rust, or destroyed, seen as too much trouble. Much of the typeface was cast out as well, melted down, and a whole history and culture of printing along with it. "In the UK, Canada, and United States, groups of artists and printers began to acquire the equipment, recognizing a value in the traditional method. Working in the shadow of the conventional print world, these individuals kept the tradition alive, adding to it a new sensibility and creating a revival in the interest and practice of traditional hand-made printing." (Letterpress, 2006).

## Addressing the Problem

Since the inception of computer graphic programs in the 1990's, graphic designers in Sweden have been working exclusively from that program base, largely unaware of traditional printing techniques or their contemporaries working in the medium. The problem lies in the lack of knowledge, and subsequently, the scarcity of use by graphic designers from this still very viable medium. It is my position that if Swedish graphic designers were made aware of the medium, shown examples, and instructed in the craft, the landscape of graphic design in Sweden could become broadened and enriched. The key to change is creating awareness, which is the overall task to which I have set myself over the course of my studies at HDK, as well as this exam work.

## Hatch Show Print

Beginning in 2009 with an internship at Hatch Show Print in Nashville, TN, I learned the basics of traditional letterpress in a client based environment. The shop itself has been continually running since 1879 and makes 500-600 jobs a year, working without the aid of computers and exclusively with letterpresses.



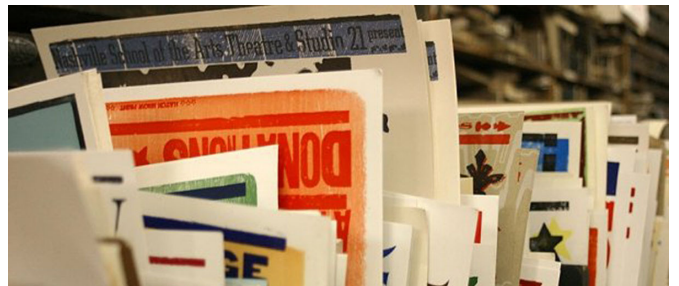
At Hatch, each job is first sketched out in the basic proportion of the final piece, taking note of the amount of copy in the brief and its importance in the context of the poster. The most pertinent information generally draws the largest typefaces (though this is not a hard and fast rule as color can be a signifier). Since all the copy and imagery is bound to the dimension of the press, decisions of typeface heirarchy, size and width, are critical. Also, the matters

of color and paper are paramount. A single color poster would not require placement consideration as would a poster with two or more colors. For a multi-colored piece, the composition for each color must be measured precisely to lock in with each other, creating a seamless design. The type of paper chosen for the job should also work with the colors chosen for the piece. At Hatch, there were three basic types of paper that made up the lion's share of the jobs; a pure white coated paper (similar to Invercote in Sweden), an uncoated off-white, and chipboard (a thick rough brown paper). Decisions were all made between the designer and client.

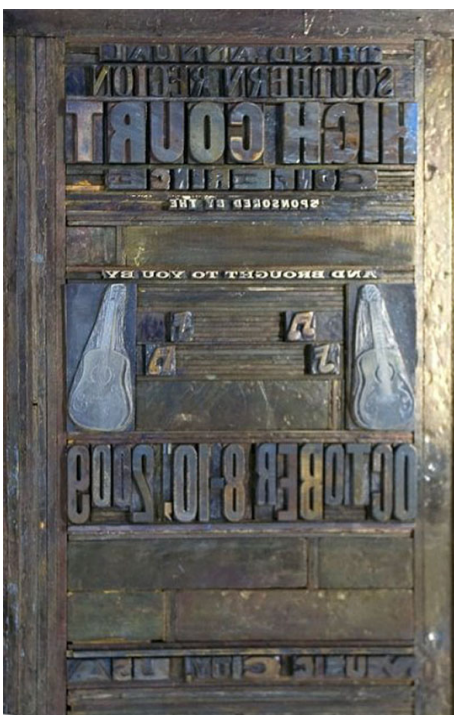




Once these decisions were set, the designer would mix the right amount of ink for the job using to a Pantone book to guide proportions of ink base. The next job was to set the press, locking in the typeface and furniture (elements lying below type-high creating empty space on the print). Once locked in, the top roller is inked, and the pressure tested on several available make-ready prints before commencing on the first print. Due to the age of the type used at Hatch, some dating back to its origin in 1879, it was necessary to elevate pieces of typeface here and there for each printing. While there, I was able to work on several jobs of varied scale side-by-side with other



designers and interns. I was reminded how fanatical people are about the medium is to this day, designers, clients, and customers alike. The experience was like a traditional print boot-camp, invaluable and essential for reinvigorated the goal of bringing traditional print back to Sweden. I learned traditional techniques and terminology that would be essential for subsequent master's work.



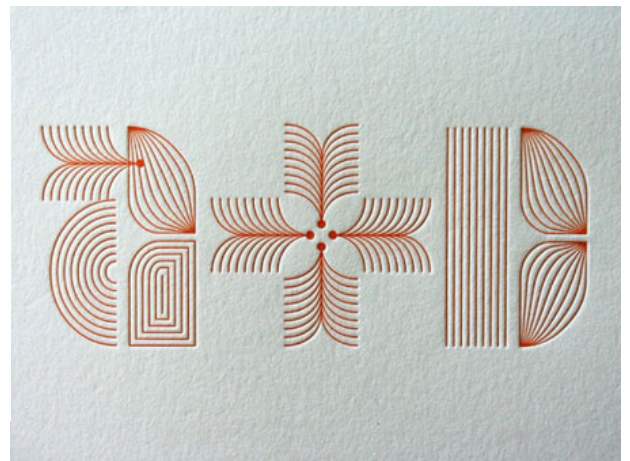
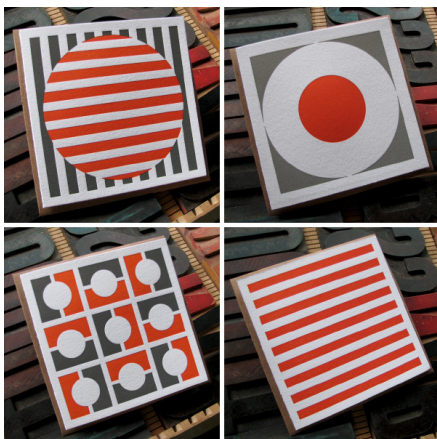


## Spreading the Word

Upon arriving back at HDK, I secured a time to give a lecture entitled *Lost Land of Letterpress* about my experiences at Hatch Show Print. Having anticipated this, I made 75 posters for the event while still working at Hatch. This was my first public presentation of the possibilities of traditional print, and it was replete with a country musician to open and set the tone for the lecture. The salon was filled and response very positive.



Concurrently, within the master's studies, I presented the work with traditional print as direction I would like to pursue. Although I happen to be drawn to the Hatch aesthetic, some of the instructors voiced a distaste for what they deemed an "old west, wanted poster" style. When I showed alternative examples of letterpress work done beyond Hatch Show Print, with contemporary designs made with metal or polymer plates, the idea began to take root.





## Motivation

The urge to see graphic designers in Sweden begin to investigate and employ traditional print is certainly aesthetic, but it also touches on several human quality issues. Designers, no longer required to work directly with the material, sit for hours in front of a screen and keyboard in a state of disconnect from the production. Consumers are bombarded with products made quickly, cheaply, and on a mass scale. This mass production of print has an impact on the environment, as much of the printed material produced has a very limited lifespan, especially in the case of event promotion. And further, disregard for traditional print media results in a loss of knowledge, which is a concern in the larger context of future energy consumption and demands.

## Graphic designers

It used to be that when one thought of a graphic designer, images of protractors, drawing boards, t-squares, markers, and rapid-o-graph pens would spring to mind. Still confined to the office setting, the designer was still in contact with the material world. Now the practice, and its image, is inseparable from the computer. Designers sit working endlessly in front of a screen, day after day, working with a program designed to ease production and which the market demands. This is all well and good, but I suspect that the designer is physically longing for more, which working with traditional print, like letterpress, would provide. When working with letterpress, it's as if the designer is in the program; pulling type, composing copy, creating color separation physically, and working directly with the press. Working directly within the physical world, the designer receives hands-on knowledge of the mechanics of the medium, its possibilities and limitations. The medium also requires much standing and walking, so more is demanded physically and more returned than sitting for hours in front of a monitor.

There is a fair amount of printed work out there which emulates the look of hand-print. While it is possible to achieve a simulated distressed and worn typeface, it is merely a stand-in for the aesthetic naturally achieved by hand-printing. Though the application of hand-printing would not work for all uses, the look and feel are still desired. Given the opportunity, I believe that many graphic designers in Sweden would be excited to investigate and use hand print media for their projects.





## Consumer

Though its importance and viability have been questioned, the demand for printed media remains. From advertisements to catalogs to newsprint and more, people and producers continue to use print in everyday applications. The speed and volume at which print can be produced is astonishing, to the point where the consumer, both the client and buying public, have become flooded with paper and print. The product is therefore not considered for its inherent value.

In contrast, when presented with hand-printed work, of the informational variety, the consumer is immediately aware of its difference. This is the case even when the two prints are visually identical. There is an immediate tactile nature to the hand-printed work. It may be embossed, or the texture of the ink apparent, or the paper quality may be non-standard. In the case of an event posters or wedding invitations, a hand-printed work is also more likely to become an artifact which the consumer may preserve well past its initial use.

This happens for a couple of reasons. First, since producers are no longer making products in this manner, the public is no longer accustomed to seeing or handling material printed traditionally. Secondly, human beings are tactile creatures. Though people are able to gather and retain information from photocopy to webpage, we are still in possession of the sense of touch. Hand-printed work, by its nature, satisfies this sense as well as working as a conduit of information. In that way, its value is inherently increased.

## Environment

Traditional hand-printing is heavy, cumbersome, and relatively inefficient, so it is not an accident that the advances made in printing. More consumers means more demand for printed material; quicker, faster, cheaper. We live in a very fast paced society and the need to know and tell is at a pitch level. The downside of this mad production and consumption is the waste it creates. Most of what is printed has a very short shelf life, being thrown away within even hours

of its production. As society addresses the environmental impact of consumption, the area of printed material would be included.

Hand printed material, on the other hand, is bound by certain physical limitations. In most cases, the print runs are between 100-300 pieces for a specific event or need. This means less waste in paper and ink, as well as solvents to clean up. Because of the limited volume, the printed work is more likely to be specifically targeted, as opposed to the ad bomb approach of covering a populated area with advertisements.





Beyond the physical limitation, since hand-made printing is so direct and limited, environmentally motivated choices in material can also be taken. Examples include soy-based ink, less caustic solvents, and bleach-free paper. And in the case that the press is fully manual, electrical use would be eliminated.

## Future

With the environment in mind, we look to the future. Again, much talk has been made of the unsustainable nature of rampant consumption in light of diminishing resources. More and more, our machines and devices rely on electric power. A simple experiment would be to attempt to go an entire day without using anything electrical, or even further, using anything that has its existence built on electricity. It would be very difficult, if not impossible.



This is not a call to regress into a pre-electrical society, though it would not be unreasonable to consider a post-electrical world. As society relies more on electrical powered devices and machines, the importance of the electric energy increases. If the electrical source is damaged, depleted, or destroyed, our machines and devices will be made irrelevant. It is a gamble to put all the eggs in one basket if we are not certain what the future looks like.

That said, I truly enjoy the convenience of the machines and devices I have. It is very easy to become reliant on a washing machine, a computer, or iPhone. But the nagging question remains the future sustainability of the power grid. This includes printed material. One of the advantages of hand-print in a post-electrical age would be its functionality. Since all the various parts involved are mechanical or physical, work could still be produced. Electricity would not be needed. With that in mind, I see wisdom in retaining and disseminating the knowledge of hand-made printing.



## EXAM WORK (take one)

The initial idea I had for the exam work was to create an actual letterpress shop in Göteborg. This was ultimately assessed as being too grand and ambitious for an exam work, so the work was curtailed to focus on a series of hand-printed letterpress posters. This proved more difficult than I had originally imagined, both with content and equipment. Letterpresses, and their inherent accessories and parts; typeface and printing furniture, are extremely scarce. Presses do exist, and over the course of the term I was able to hunt down a few leads. Many were in disrepair or in need of maintenance, though it was exciting to see that, in fact, they could be found. Typeface, on the other hand, proved to be a major obstacle. One lead I had been following had to be set aside due to time constraints. In the midst of searching, I followed up on a request of sponsorship I had made of the linoleum manufacturer Forbo during the previous term. They came through, sending me linoleum from which I began to create cases of type.



For the typeface, I decided to look for a gothic and an Egyptian type within the HDK computer base. I chose Franklin Gothic Condensed, which I condensed a further 40%, and Rosewood Fill. Also, for the larger typefaces, I chose Cairo in addition to Franklin Gothic. My choices reflected my experience and longing for the work of Hatch Show Print. In the end, I cut over 600 pieces of type in three basic sizes; the small and medium sizes were multiples of the larger pieces, 25% and 50%, respectively. This was done in order to more readily arrange the type for print. I mounted each piece of cut linoleum on 18mm plywood to achieve a level approximating type-high.

Finding content with the right tone for the poster work was an ongoing struggle. Initially I had wanted to make manifest an idea I had been working on in a previous term called *Words Get in the Way* in which I



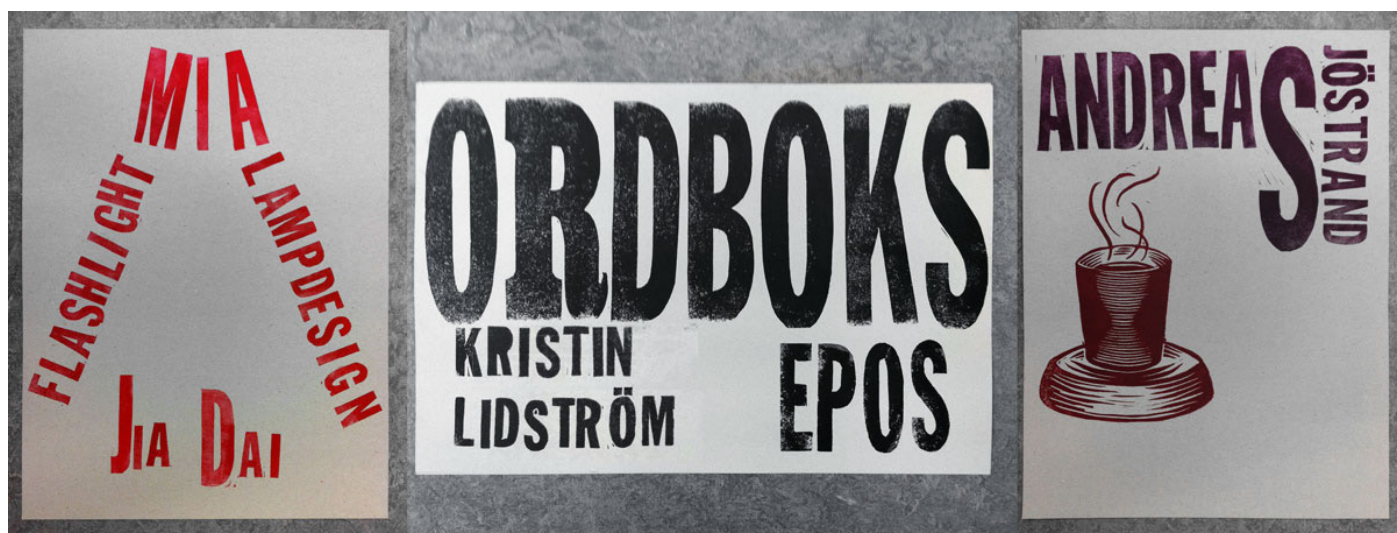


would print Swedish and English words having an identical spelling but different meaning. This was panned as already investigated.

The next idea was to make *Posters for the Apocalypse*, which would touch on my own upbringing and experience growing up in the church as a son of a pastor. The heaviness of the material, as well as my lack of distance from it, eventually sealed off this idea. The third idea was to make posters for local bands with whom I have had first hand contact, but this did not ultimately meet the approval of my instructors. The final idea, and the one which I set myself to making, was a set of posters for my classmates and their own exam works. This idea satisfied my own requirements for showcasing hand-made print and a sense of first person narrative within my own social circle.



One unfortunate set-back was getting access to Valand, which houses presses made for this particular kind of printing. Time after time, I would try to make contact with the personnel at the school trying to get access for my exam work, only to be rebuffed. Finally, after a nearly two year effort, I was granted access to the presses with only a couple weeks before my examination date. The ensuing effort came up short during the examination and I was left to rethink and retool for a second examination.





## EXAM WORK (take two)

Immediately on the heels of the failed examination, I set myself to making a piece to shake off the dust. The resulting work, *JA/NEJ*, was a large scale piece made up of smaller printed panels. I placed the piece in the main hallway of HDK. This would become a key act of creation informing my final work for the ensuing re-examination.



Still uncertain about what may have gone wrong in the previous exam, I tried to zero in on the comments and questions posed during the event to make a new work that would satisfy all involved during the second exam. Since I had created a sizable collection of typeface, I abandoned the idea of making separate posters under a singular theme, and instead focused on the potential of type itself.

### Sketches

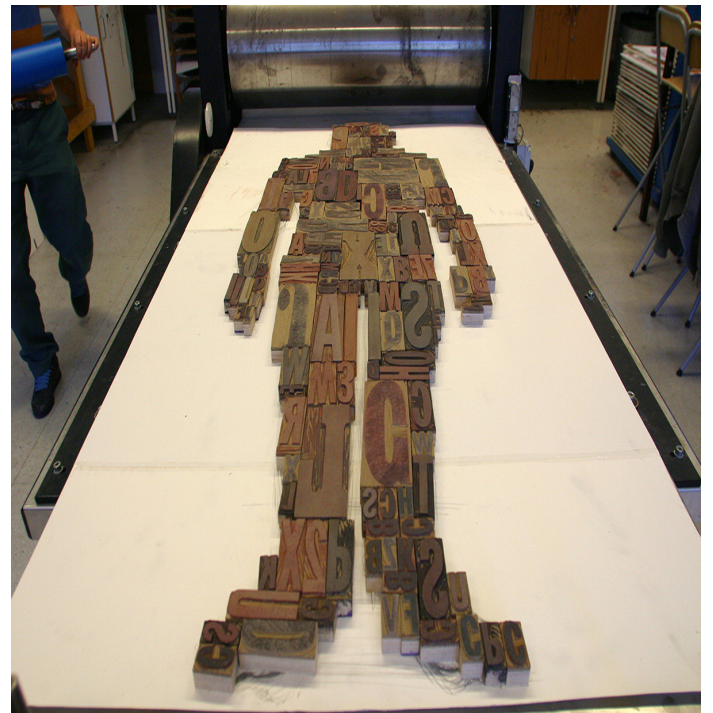
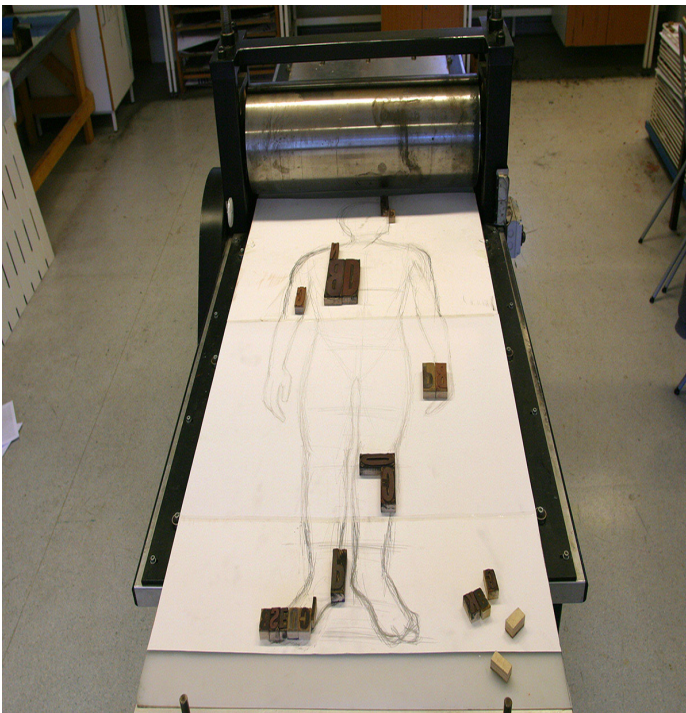
I worked in collaboration with print artist Eric Saline for the first few “sketches”. At the time I had a sense that these pieces would likely not become the exam work, but rather part of the process. The first sketches were random gatherings of the typeface collected in circular forms. Seeing them, they reminded me of speech bubbles or brains, which quickly lead to the next idea for making body forms from the typeface.

*Body of Type* was quickly conceived and composed. It would be a multiple layered work of type overprinted with CMYK inks. Each print took on a life of its own, with some stopping after printing the first layer and others taking four or more layers of overprinted ink. Total time spent working on the *Body of Type* prints was around a month, mostly due to the lack of dryer added to the ink, a lesson learned through the process.





It was this work, along with several other sketched out ideas, which I presented to my examiner for assessment and approval to pursue further. Though the work was well received, I felt something was still amiss, a certain hook in the work (to borrow a phrase from songwriting). Over the following weeks, I worked to ascertain whether *Body of Type* was the absolute correct direction for the exam work.



In the midst of working on these sketches, an event occurred that would serve as an inspiration for what would become the final exam work.



## 2011 Egyptian Revolution/Arab Spring

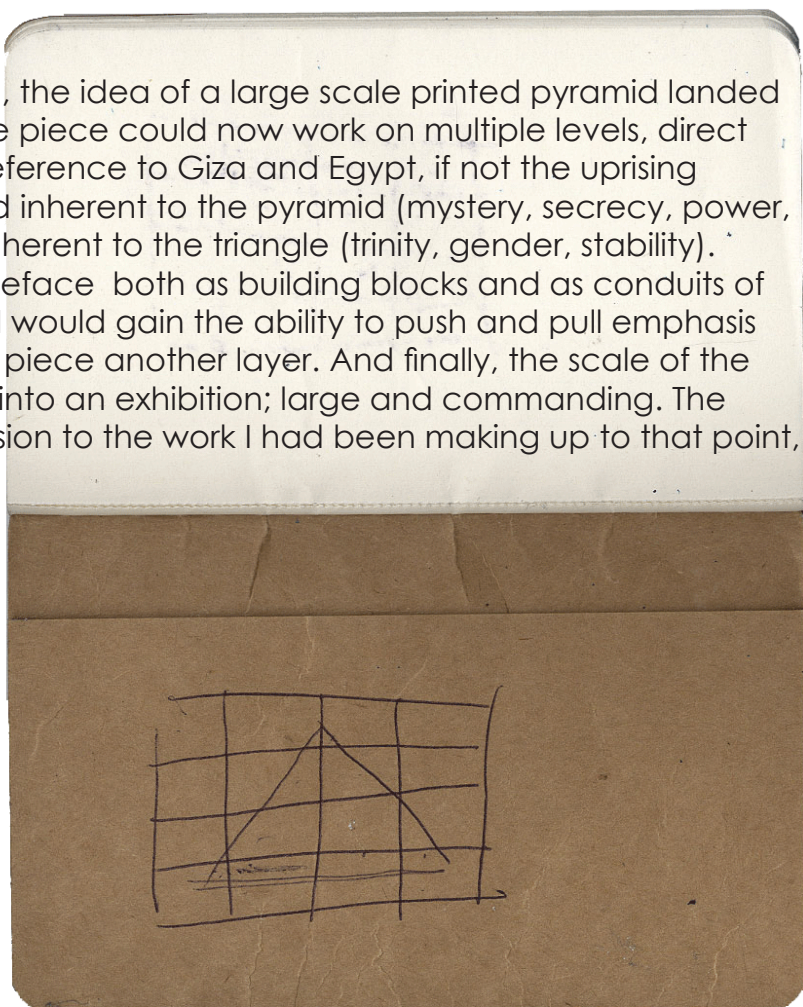
At the end of January 2011, word spread on facebook for a protest against the Mubarak regime in Egypt. News organizations were speculating whether or not it would amount to anything like the Tunisian uprising that had occurred only weeks before. The resulting movement was beyond what most analysts could have imagined; several million people in the streets of Cairo, Alexandria, and Mansoura calling for Mubarak's ouster. This action would continue to escalate over the course of the following weeks and becoming a second touchstone for a growing unrest of people throughout other countries in the Middle East that is still moving at the writing of this paper. Countries affected by this domino effect call to democratic voice include; Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Djibouti, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Mauritania, and Sudan. This was big news which informed the exact shape of my exam project; a large pyramid made of printed type.



## Pyramid

After months of figuring and refiguring, the idea of a large scale printed pyramid landed firm as brick and light as a feather; the piece could now work on multiple levels, direct and indirect. There was the obvious reference to Giza and Egypt, if not the uprising specifically. There was the idea of and inherent to the pyramid (mystery, secrecy, power, stability). There was the idea of and inherent to the triangle (trinity, gender, stability). There was the potential to use the typeface both as building blocks and as conduits of message. With the addition of color, I would gain the ability to push and pull emphasis within the composed type, giving the piece another layer. And finally, the scale of the piece matched my sensibilities going into an exhibition; large and commanding. The idea was a perfect and logical extension to the work I had been making up to that point, shapes out of printed typeface.

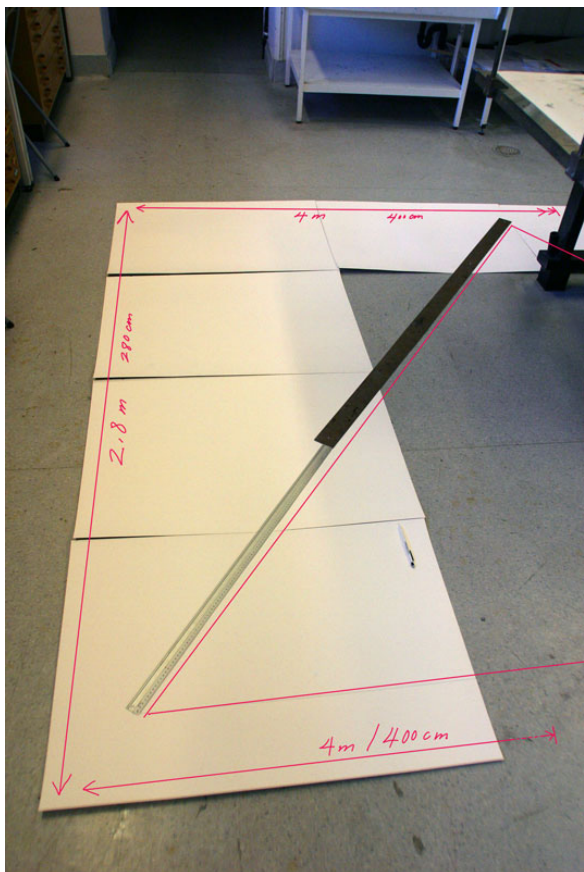
The multiple aspects about the idea of the pyramid/triangle itself intrigued me and drew me in, how it seemed to always be laden with so much meaning. The shape shows up on the back of the dollar bill with the "all seeing eye", which is itself a symbol of secret societies like the Free Masons. There are the famous triads; Father, Son, Holy Spirit / Mind, Body, Soul / Father, Mother, Child / Past, Present, Future / Larry, Curly, Moe.





Then, of course, the the obvious nod to the pyramids on the plains of Giza, the wonder and awe they have inspired in their creation and enduring design. The pyramid/triangle seems to retain a certain visual, and perhaps emotional, irritation beyond that of a square of circle, demanding attention.

When the inspiration struck, I made a simple sketch of a triangular shape within a grid of 16 panels on the back flap of my notebook. Each of the panels would measure 100 x 70 cm and would be printed separately, echoing the execution of *JA/NEJ* from the previous year. Fully assembled, the piece would measure 4 m wide by 2.8 m tall and would serve as a good showcase for the medium of the hand printed typeface, from which the pyramid would be assembled.



I first set to measuring out the printable areas on secondary sheets of 100 x 70 cm paper, and then began to compose the typeface within the parameters, panel by panel. The initial panels along the baseline were composed of prior ideas, including words from *Words Get in the Way* and *Posters for the Apocalypse*, as well as the composition, made mostly of the smaller typeface, standing figuratively as a representation of the small people at the bottom of society. Also within the baseline, I used the large typeface to spell out in my best Swedish, *Vill Du Ett Meddelande*, which could serve as a subtitle to the piece as it is a work of layered messages.

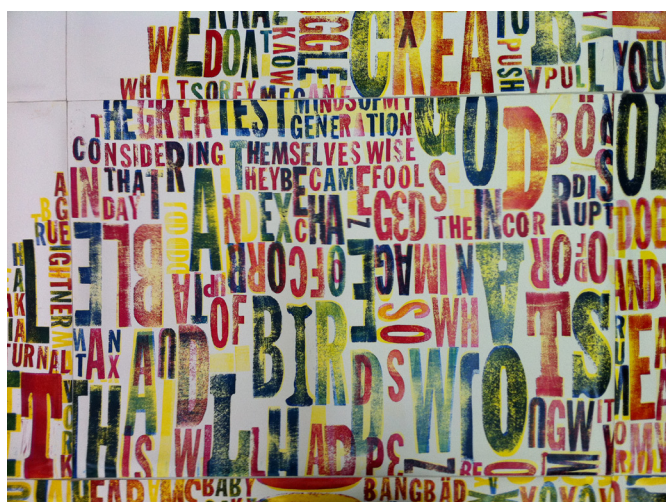
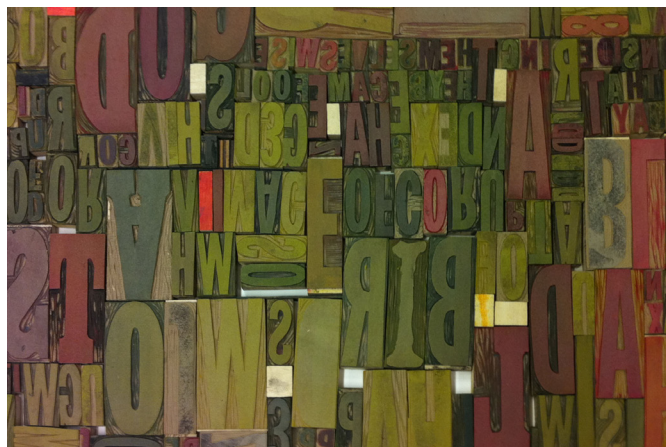
Each panel received a different treatment thematically, making the piece as a whole a work made by "stream of conscious". Ideas ranged from phrases and verses previously meditated through, the names of people and places specific



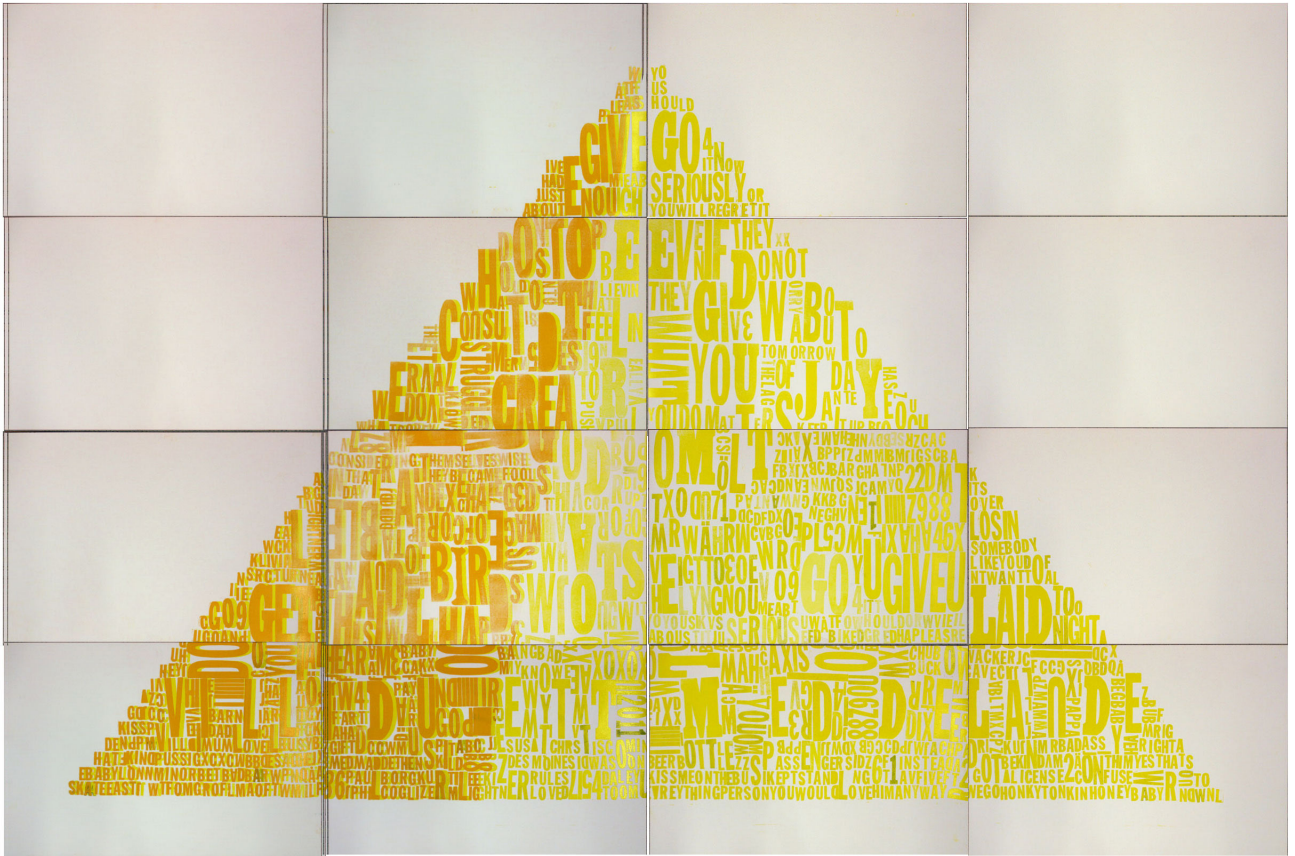


to my own history, and even lyrics of songs playing on the mix tape I happened to be listening to at the time made it into the composition. Working on the overprinting, I was able to play with cyan and magenta ink to pull out more phrases and ideas, many bouncing between English and Swedish. A critical difference between this work and *Body of Type* is the conscious effort to make sensible phrasing, rather than using the typeface as a simple armature for the shape. This direction crystallized after meeting with my advisor.

From each composed panel, two pieces were printed with a base of process yellow ink. This was to ensure that, should I make a catastrophic error on one panel, there would be a back-up piece printed. Also, printing with process yellow as the base layer is the standard for printing CMYK, as it is the lightest layer after the white paper, working as a reflector for the subsequent overprint. The end result was two separate pyramids; one basic yellow overprinted with an orange ink to create a “shadow” side, and another using cyan and magenta inks in a free form style.









## Reflection

The thread that has run through my studies at HDK has been working with print, traditional printing in particular. As mentioned previously, this began as a reaction to a perceived absence in the practice and output of hand-made print in contemporary Swedish graphic design. Graphic designers in Sweden have been stuck, staring at a screen from their office chairs for too long. It has been my position that, were they only able to see and experience hand-print in graphic design for themselves, it would spark curiosity and interest in the medium.

This is ultimately what my exam work has been about; to create a piece that would draw attention to the medium of hand print. What I want to say is, "this is possible. You too can do this". I would love to see more graphic designers exploring traditional print for themselves, the product, consumer, and society. I can easily envision a future where the idea catches fire and a small cottage industry is built around the medium. I am not saying that other forms of printing and written communication are invalid or should be abolished, in fact the means by which this paper is being read is a testament to the positives of having these options available. What I am saying is that hand-made print is still valid and should be given consideration, especially for those working in graphic design. I believe it's an idea whose time has come again.

As evidence, I will point to a vernissage at Rum För Papper held 18 May, 2011 in conjunction with HDK students. The students were assigned to make cards with a running theme in a square format. All of the cards would then be output on a Heidelberg letterpress at Göteborgstryckeriet. Being that the instructor for the course, Pascal Prosek, was also my opponent during my first examination in which I extolled the virtues and possibilities of letterpress printing, I am inclined to think it may be correlated.



## Afterword

Though practice and product of traditional printing are a rarity due to technological advances, consumer demand, and loss of infrastructure and knowledge, I do believe that a revival in Sweden is eminent. I see it much like the "slow food" movement, in which chefs and diners alike appreciate the time and effort taken to prepare the dishes, as well as consciously thinking about their environment. I have made this observation in my talks, but it really snapped to life when an instructor at Valand pulled me aside to show me something he had just printed out from the computer. "Only took me 10 minutes to make this", he mentioned, comparing with the weeks it had taken me to complete my project. "Well, you can microwave your food, too", I replied. This encapsulates the spirit of my thinking; though we now have the capability for instantaneous product, we seem to have lost an elemental, inherent human quality in the process. And it's this quality, a sense of real meaning in the material, for which many in contemporary society are longing.



## REFERENCES

Jury, David. LETTERPRESS: New Applications for Traditional Skills. Rotovision SA, Switzerland. 2006.

Landqvist, Marriane (redaktor). DET TRYCKTA ORDET. LTs förlag, Stockholm. 1986.

Glass, Ira #246: My Pen Pal: Prologue. This American Life, Public Radio International, March 22, 2010

"I think it's so easy to communicate that there's almost no reason to communicate anything of interest. You know, it's become like breathing, and if you listen to cell phone conversations on the train it's always, just, you know, monosyllables like, ' Hi. I'm here' or 'I'll be there at 5:19 instead of 5:18', and, it's you know, the most boring verbiage you'll ever hear listening to someone else talk into their cell phone". Ted Widmer speaking to Ira Glass on This American Life.

## FURTHER RELATED MEDIA AND RESOURCES

### FILM

AMERICAN ARTIFACT MOVIE, Becker, Merle (producer/director)) 2009  
[www.americanartifactmovie.com](http://www.americanartifactmovie.com)

TYPEFACE: a film by Justine Nagan, Nagan, Justine (producer) 2009  
[typeface.kartemquin.com](http://typeface.kartemquin.com)

DIED YOUNG, STAYED PRETTY, Yaghoobian, Eileen (director) 2008  
[www.diedyoungstayedpretty.com](http://www.diedyoungstayedpretty.com)

HELVETICA, Hustwit, Gary (director) 2007  
[www.helveticafilm.com](http://www.helveticafilm.com)

### WEBSITES

AMERICAN POSTER INSTITUTE (API)  
[www.americanposterinstitute.com](http://www.americanposterinstitute.com)

BRIAR PRESS - a letterpress community  
[www.briarpress.org](http://www.briarpress.org)

GIGPOSTERS.COM - gig posters, flyers and handbills from around the world!  
[www.gigposters.com](http://www.gigposters.com)

HATCH SHOW PRINT  
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