

TRICKING THE IMPOSSIBLE

WORD AND TYPE • PENNY RIMBAUD AND BRACKETPRESS

EXHIBITION GUIDE

IN THE BACKGROUND... AN INTRODUCTION

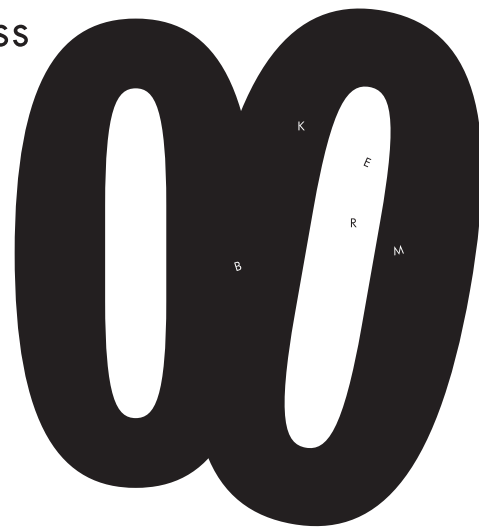
by Christian Brett

I first came to Penny's work through Crass, saving up my dinner money to buy *Feeding of the Five Thousand* when I was about 10 or 11 years old. Twenty years later we would start working together and a great friendship has grown from that.

Our first meeting came about in 2003 while I was typesetting books for publisher Mark Hodgkinson at Pomona Books. Mark had an idea to create a series of lyric books by English bands, and asked if I had any ideas. The only one I thought worthwhile would be to do a Crass lyric book – but to present it like poetry, elegant rather than the line / line / line typewriter style of their earlier LPs. I drafted up some rough layouts, came up with the name for the book *Love Songs*, the back cover blurb and the publishing date (14th February), and also the non-chronological running order. Sometime later, Penny sent Pomona

a couple of manuscripts – *Or Maybe Tomorrow* and *This Crippled Flesh* – which Pomona didn't want to be involved in. When I first saw *This Crippled Flesh* I was so excited. It was like being given the opportunity to work on a William Burroughs text, but more. So, with my partner Alice, began several years of revisiting and revising the typesetting while trying to get someone to take on the book and publish it properly – John Calder, Hamish Hamilton and Damien Hirst being those who showed genuine interest. In late 2009 we revisited the design and overhauled the core typefaces and got the money together to publish the first edition of 100 copies, which much to our surprise sold-out before the books arrived back from the printers.

Bracketpress as an entity actually came about though Penny and Gee (Vaucher) reading my degree



dissertation, *Censorship by Omission and the Economics of Truth* (C4) which Penny suggested publishing as a pamphlet. Gee suggested the name 'Bracket Press' after my penchant for bracketing the folios in my book designs. And so Bracketpress came into being and is also my trading name.

The first pamphlet we published of Penny's work was *Freedom is such a big word* [2006]. This essay was originally commissioned by *Dazed & Confused* magazine for their 'Freedom Issue' [Vol.2 #39, July 2006]. Ironically the piece was pulled at the last minute and so Penny gave it to us to publish as a pamphlet. Since which we've published much of his writing and also carried out some typesetting of his work for other publishers.

WHO?

Penny Rimbaud was born in 1943. He is a writer, poet, philosopher, raconteur, painter, musician and activist. He was a member of the performance art group EXIT and co-founder of the Stonehenge Free Festival. In 1977 he co-founded with Steve Ignorant, the massively influential punk rock collective Crass who disbanded in 1984. He continues to perform and record with a diverse variety of musicians, drawn mainly from the avant-garde. He has recently participated in events supported by the British Council in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. He shares a house with his lifelong artistic partner Gee Vaucher.

Christian Brett (b.1969) left school at 16. He is fortunate to be one of the last properly taught typesetters, serving his apprenticeship under the tutelage of Messrs. Ashworth and Hall at The Composing Room, Manchester. Following the collapse of the industry with the introduction of desktop publishing, he went on to sell guitars and amplifiers for 10 years. Having gotten sick of selling dreams to people – he went back to school, eventually graduating from Manchester Metropolitan University Interactive Arts, BA (Hons) 1st. It was while studying he met his partner Alice, with whom he later founded Bracketpress. He is a self-employed typesetter and book designer.

Alice Smith (b.1983) graduated with a 1st class BA and MA in Design and Art Direction from Manchester Metropolitan University in 2005. Since which she has produced illustrations and designs for books, magazines, brand identities, music packaging, retail, advertising, installations and exhibitions. She has a particular interest in book illustration and cover design, she has produced book covers and illustrated books for Penguin Books, Pan Macmillan. She recently produced a series of illustrations with curator Judith Clark for *The Vulgar: Fashion Redefined* exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery. Alice and has worked as the art director for the *Idler* magazine for the past 10 years.

"You can make a small fortune in publishing as long as you start out with a big one." – John Calder

Never a truer word spoken in jest. Because Bracketpress as a publishing entity is entirely self-financed and run on the fumes earned from working for proper publishers, we have never actively sought to publish anything; the work we have published is the result of existing relationships and not solicited material. At the heart of Bracketpress is the idea of doing something I love (typesetting) without the interference of non-creatives (accounts managers, marketing departments and heads of publishing). I've never got around to creating a portfolio of work, but the things we've published have drawn people to work with us.

As a typesetter, when working for clients – I see my role as both architect and bricklayer, and the work I carry out is one of constant learning. Endlessly refining an idea, working towards that perfect piece of typesetting.* The harmonious balance between black and white. The understated beauty. Unfussy, economic and elegant. The space between the notes ... taking those principals and applying them to Penny's work is, I think where I have the most fun. The work on show here is the playground, it's where I get to fuck around and fail without fear, and it is where I succeed.

Alice says: "Christian's priority is always the interior, the exterior cover design he seems to dismiss as 'window dressing', and often goes with a gut instinct minimal design repurposed from his private projects. It's quite the opposite approach to how most book designers work."

Alice's illustrations are usually drawn

* The *perfect piece of typesetting* is a fiction. It only exists in the clutter-clatter mind of the compositor. See: "How many typesetters does it take to change a lightbulb?" "Four. One to actually do the work and three to say, 'I wouldn't have done it like that.'"

from a stream of consciousness whilst reading the manuscripts, and then tend to come together as a mixture of collage and mark making, and eventually juxtaposed digitally.

Penny's work is challenging. Visceral. It demands attention and concentration. It is not easy. It is provocative and confrontational. It is deeply personal and at the same time deeply political. It is also very beautiful, moving and occasionally very funny (in the same way that Burroughs and Pinter are ... funny).

I've said this many times, that through my day job I've had the opportunity to work with some very interesting individuals and occasionally some brilliant writers; but I would choose to work with Penny's writing over anyone's, bar none. The generosity of spirit and endless encouragement both Penny and Gee have given us over the years is extraordinary. That they continue to grow and move forward as artists, creating work that is as challenging as what they were doing 40 years ago is an inspiration.

This exhibition has been laid out in a non-chronological order because, as you'll see, many of the projects span time and overlap in a disorderly fashion.

A note on archiving ...

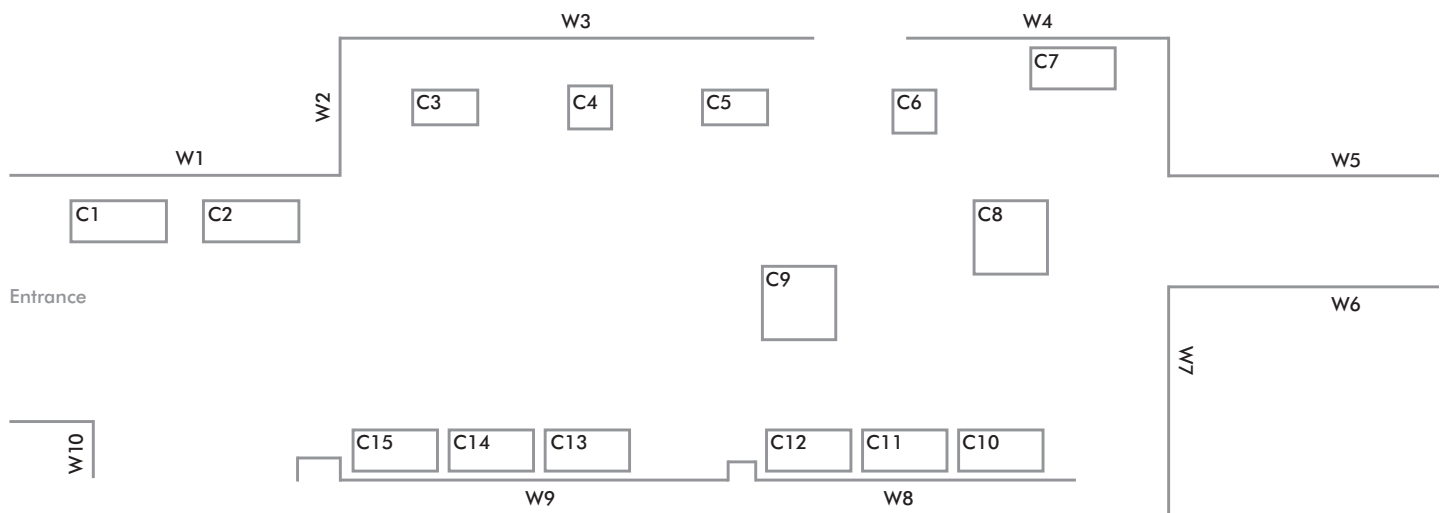
What is an archive? The process? The good stuff? The work that wasn't compromised in favour of what the committee wanted? The detritus of design? The physical evidence that you existed and all the bad decisions you made. It's like a diary. Like a collection of LPs and CDs, it triggers memories. Opening up the archive to pull out the material relating to Penny for this show was strange. Some of the stuff I'd completely forgotten about or didn't even remember doing. And the occasional, "Ah, that's why we did that that way!"

I suppose this is my version of endless camera phone pictures and YouTube clips. I rarely take photographs unless

it's for something very specific – which I usually ask Alice to take, much to her irritation at my lack of tech savviness. There's nothing more irritating to me than people constantly snapping away, whether on a trip out or a concert or whatever. You'll never look at them again. You'll never look at that stuff once it's posted it on Facebook or YouTube. Surely, memories are enough?

Aside from constant use of notebooks, I've also kept what I call workbooks. The first of these I started around 1997. Up until a few years back they are what you would expect, but since discovering Blurb.com I've been creating one-off books documenting the more interesting things I've been involved in – they are in effect an edited archive of material that would otherwise remain invisible on an external hard drive. I know, the time spent creating these could have been spent producing a portfolio, but hey ho. I also keep an open workbook on my machine that runs from January to December each year which I add to as I go along. They include all sorts, like the ridiculous email I received on New Year's Eve inviting me to estimate costs for typesetting and letterpress printing a book at an outdoor festival this summer. But predominately they contain my own work, stuff which isn't directly connected to any jobbing work, that has no purpose other than the doing. My favourite thing is taking the often mediocre images sent to me by clients which I then destroy beyond all recognition in Photoshop to create beautiful painterly abstract images. There's hundreds of these now, without purpose other than they give me great pleasure in making them.

Ask me the question and I'll tell you that this archive is full of material that was driving me and Alice nuts. It was filling up our flat, so we use Special Collections as a dumping ground for stuff we can't bear to let go. But the truth is we're very proud that Special Collections think highly enough of what we do, to want to be the custodians of this material.



SPECIAL COLLECTIONS GALLERY FLOOR PLAN

THIS CRIPPLED FLESH [2003–10]

C1 (top shelf) • A page from Penny's original typescript alongside the typeset version.

- Several spiral bound proofs 2003–04, including casebound proof exhibited in Interactive Arts Degree Show.

- Cut to size proof featuring trace wrapper and early cover illustration.

- Mounted page used as part of a series of framed pages from *This Crippled Flesh* and *Love Songs* also exhibited in the degree show.

(middle) • **Bettina Rheims *The***

Crucifixion – Pt. 1 of 3 [1997], framed newsprint from article about her 1998 book and exhibition *I.N.R.I.* The image was the original inspiration for the feel of the front cover.

- **Stendhal *Le Rouge et le Noir***

– altered book by Alice Smith [2007].

- *This Crippled Flesh* workbook [2003] showing reference material and initial type ideas for 'The Beasts of Land' chapter, within part 3 of *This Crippled Flesh*.

- Miscellaneous notebooks.

(bottom) • Collaged elements and textures by Alice Smith, produced during her MA studies [2004–05].

C2 (top shelf) • Two early hand-bound copies of *This Crippled Flesh* [2004].

- **A Little Book of Illustrations inspired by the novel *This Crippled Flesh*** [2005] handmade concertina book by Alice Smith, with illustrations

and sample pages, edition of 20 – one of the first Bracketpress editions.

- ***This Crippled Flesh*** – trade hard-back covers: 1st ed. [2010] black with red endpapers, 2nd ed. [2010] red with black, 3rd ed. [2011] dark grey with pink. Copy of 1st edition complete with dust jacket.

- ***This Crippled Flesh* and *No Non Sense Dada – This Crippled Flesh MMX Remixed*** [2009] casebound test proofs, precursor to the final published edition of *This Crippled Flesh*.

- **Advert** (enlarged) Box ad placed in *The Idler* which quotes our favourite review of *This Crippled Flesh*.

(middle) • Illustration ideas.

- Uncut sheets of colour plates. Used as frontispiece tip-ins for the ten parts of the book, up until we published the 2010 edition, where the plates were put into a separate colour section at the back of the book.

- **Red knickers** small cut up pieces were included in an envelope at the back of early editions.

- **Post modernist reality is a lie...** letterpress printed bookmarks with 8-gauge magnesium block.

Numerous runs of this were done in different colours, as well as broad-sides and postcards.

- Dust jacket printers proof.

- **Pig Triptych** proof, these photos were edited from a series by Alice, taken at a butchers shop in 2004.

(bottom) • Hand bound copy of ***This Crippled Flesh***, one of two faux-leather bindings, a copy of which was given to one of Penny's favourite writers J.G. Ballard. We knew Ballard disliked overtly fruity language in books and suspected he wouldn't want to read *This Crippled Flesh*, he was unwell and nearing the end of his life when he received it, so we were touched by the letter written by his partner, Claire Walsh, addressed to Gee. We never had the chance to meet Ballard, but we did have the pleasure of Claire's company a couple of times.

- ***No Non Sense Dada*** [2005] hand bound, unique editions. Each a different deconstruction of *This Crippled Flesh*. There is no real reason for this book's existence, other than we thought it was funny at the time.

- letterpress workbook – title plate and bookmarks.

- notebook and page sample

- hand-cut stencils.

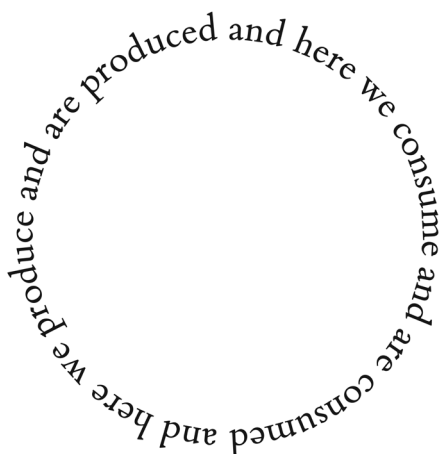
W1 • ***The Bane of Existence***

(*The Tenor Player's Lament*) [2009]

re-design of part 5 of *This Crippled Flesh*, also showing workbook spreads of original 2004 chapter spreads (4th frame). *This Crippled Flesh* has a series of repeating design motifs throughout the book, reflecting the multi-layered nature of the text. This chapter is the most

self-contained piece of design in the whole book. I was once invited to talk to a group of students about the book and focused on this chapter as a step-by-step example, explaining how the design was informed by the music of John Coltrane and Albert Ayler... at the end the class looked like dogs that had just been shown a card trick. I wasn't invited back. *A large text format version is available.*

W2 • Post modernist reality is a lie... from *This Crippled Flesh*. Poster idea for a proposed series of silk-screen prints by Existstencil Press and Pictures on Walls [2009]. This, along with a handful of others, remain unpublished.



• **And here we produce and are produced and here we consume and are consumed** [2004] p.11 from *This Crippled Flesh*. A larger version of this was part of a triptych in my degree show produced on reflective black perspex with black text, wall mounted at such a height that the viewer saw their own reflection framed within the sentence.

IN THE BEGINNING... WAS THE WORD

In the beginning... is an exhibition by Gee Vaucher and Christian Brett based on a performance poem by Penny Rimbaud. First exhibited in 2005 at the Exeter Text Festival, and subsequently in Antwerp alongside *The Sound of Stones in the Glass House* installation, under the title *Transparency* [2008]. The text was originally presented as a series of A0 size hangings alongside prints,

painting, video, vinyl letting and a mirror (see photo in handmade book).

C3 • Examples of three different editions of the pamphlet, one of which is the very first pamphlet, pre-Bracketpress, produced in old school cut'n'paste photocopy style.

Other examples produced for the Antwerp show and for sale through our website.

• Notebook shows sketch for poster and flyer design. When I came across the framed poster (**W3**) while preparing material for this exhibition, I was amused to find that it doesn't state the name of the show... then remembered that the venue blew-up the backside of the flyer to use as A3 advertising posters thus omitting the title of the show. The performance towards the end of the show was the last Crass Agenda gig.

• A5 two-sided flyer

• Handmade book documenting the exhibition and performance

W3 • In the beginning... was the word

This set of three frames shows the new design intended for release around the Crass remasters series, although shown here is the revised larger format version which we hope one day to have the funds to release (see also **C4 bottom**).

C4 (top) • Censorship by Omission and the Economics of Truth

[2003] casebound dissertation by Christian Brett. This is where it all started. Having read this while we were preparing for the *In the beginning...* show, Penny suggested I should send this out to get published, or failing that – to put it out myself as a pamphlet. And I'd need a publishing name to put it out under. Gee came up with the name Bracket Press out of my penchant at that time for bracketing folios in my book designs. The name looked better as one word in the original logo

] B R A C K E T P R E S S [

and so we have since stuck to Bracketpress, which often gets switched back to two words if people are using auto-correct

settings on their machines, or just not paying attention.

• Two editions of the pamphlet were produced, 2005 and 2006.

• **Cxnsxrshxp by Xmxssxxn xnd thx Xcxnmxcs xf Trxth** a very limited edition artist book, with all the vowels 'x'-ed out, was produced for a group show at the 96 Gillespie Gallery in Highbury.

(middle) • **...Was the word** [2005]

884 page workbook which collects all the working ideas and correspondence connected with the exhibition. Quarter bound using waste sheets from Carolyn Trant's *Art for Life: The story of Peggy Angus* published by Incline Press [2005].

Graham and Kathy of Incline Press have been immensely supportive friends and collaborators since we first met in 2004. They left an Incline Press trade card and note in the back of one of my degree show books, saying they liked my show, but couldn't offer me any work as all their books were metal set, but that I was welcome to visit the workshop anytime I liked. Graham assumed that I had come from a hot metal background and was surprised to find this was not the case (I used to operate Linotype photo-typesetting systems). This is up there as one of those life-changing chance meetings and the start of two very dear friendships. A few months of learning to set type by hand and understanding the letterpress printing process improved my computer typesetting immeasurably. It also made me work faster and get things down correctly in the first instance. By this I mean, I rarely sit and mess around for hours on end on the computer until a design feels right. Instead I'll visualise the book in my head for a couple of weeks, think about the structure of the text, what might be the appropriate typeface(s) to use, the feel of the page. And so, by the time I come to sit at the machine the design tends to get executed very quickly. I'll sometimes draw the page out first, but often the page sketches in my notebooks are done at the same time I've drawn them up on the machine to remind me of the x-y coordinates for the

various elements and the page margins and gutter.

Usually the first idea, with a little fine tuning, is the one that gets used. I gained a lot of confidence in my work through this and very rarely show clients more than one page design. Working at Incline Press also took me deeper into the history of type and print, which is important for good design, and the rabbit hole of collecting old books about type and print and also introduced me to the world of finely produced books.

• **The Mystic Saxophonist**

[New Year Book 2008–09] A poem by Walt Whitman, with title page illustration by J. J. Grandville of an ophicleide, a distant relation to the saxophone. (Whitman's original is the trumpeter, but as we used to say, "It's close enough for jazz!"). Letterpress printed using Jim Rimmer's Stern [2008], which was the first ever typeface to be *simultaneously released* in both metal and digital forms. The idea for this New Year book came from Gee Vaucher's stencil backdrop which quotes Walt Whitman – the photo shows Penny performing *I The Indigene* and *Africa Seems So Far Away* with Jennifer Maidman and Annie Whitehead at the opening for the Transparency exhibition in Antwerp.

(bottom) **Last Amendment & Crass Agenda music packaging**

- Notebook poster idea for Last Amendment.
- CD designs for **Crass Agenda Four Tenors In The Dark** (later **Last Amendment**) – which was the first performance of *In the beginning...* at the old Vortex jazz club in Stoke Newington. This recording was later scheduled to be released alongside the Crass remasters series – *The Crassical Collection*, but as with *Christ's Reality Asylum*, it was abandoned.

W3 • Penny Rimbaud's Last Amendment – Vortex Jazz Club 26 September 2012

Gig poster for Vortex Jazz Club performance and book launch for *America, and how!* (see **C12**).

Around 20 of these were produced to promote the gig around Dalston, nearly all were stolen with only a couple surviving on the night of the gig.

EXITSTENCIL PRESS MUSIC

C5 In 2010, Penny and Gee decided to relaunch their Exitstencil Press imprint, publish new books and music as well as redesigning and remastering previous work, Bracketpress worked with them on several aspects.

- Notebook showing initial design for what would eventually become Existencilisms packaging. This initial idea for a trace paper cover done for ex-Buzzcocks bass player Tony Barber using an obsolete format: credit card sized CD-rom. We still think these two band names are better monikers than L'Académie des Vanités. The design was later adapted for his *The Near Future* project using Woolworths C60 cassette tapes.

Work designed with Gee for Exitstencil Press:

- Exitstencil Press logo: Penny's initial ideas, Christian's computer designs and final version hand finished by Gee.
- Exitstencil Press bookmark and printing block.
- two initial cover designs [2008] for 1972 live recording of EXIT performance at The Roundhouse. Again, intended as parallel release to the *Crassical Collection*.
- **EXIT The Mystic Trumpeter – The Ices Tapes** [2013] CD packaging. I think Gee initially loathed this design; the coloured spots, which I blagged as being some kind of graphic score and an attempt to inject a bit of colour and fun to the *Crassical Collection* series. Gee changed the colour palette of the dots which I thought was tinkering for tinkering sake, but again she was right and made the overall thing sing!
- **The Pity of War** [2017] initial cover design for Penny's reading of the war poems of Wilfred Owen. This powerful performance piece will be released in September under the title *What Passing Bells* by One Little Indian Records.
- Handmade mock-up: CD packaging

for remastered version of Penny Rimbaud's *Acts of Love*.

- **Acts of Love** [Exitstencil Press 2011]
- Example page spreads from original page size of *Acts of Love*, illustrations by Gee.
- **Oh Magick Kingdom** [2011] – generic packaging and logo design for Exitstencilisms series of short run releases.

SOURCE, INSPIRATION AND ARCHIVE

C6 (top) • A selection of key books from the Bracketpress bookshelf. All have, to some degree, influenced the design and typesetting of material in this exhibition. Other than to say that both Tschichold and Bringhurst write beautifully about the practice, we'll leave it to those interested to figure out what those influences might be.

- Related material: **Crass A Series of Shock Slogans and Mindless Token Tantrums** [Exitstencil Press, 1982].

- **Crass Love Songs** [2004] one-off hardback binding for Interactive Arts degree show.

- **Penny Rimbaud The Diamond Signature – A Sub-Contract Reality** [1974] original typescript.

- **Heard Too Much About Crass – The Full Stop** [2013] Bracketpress workbook documenting the material gathered for the *Bullshit Crass* project.

- **Crass The Thatchergate Tape · The National Archives – Prem 19/1380** [2014].

- **Miscellaneous ephemera:** vintage spark plug (boxed) wrapped in blue cloth and pink string – a birthday present from Penny, 2013 + handmade card from Penny

- **No Comma Non Sense** (birthday card mock-up) / letterpress printed birthday card mock-up with comma sticker for Penny, referencing his last minute pedantic punctuation changes to *Love Songs*.

- **Everybody's talking... but no one says a word** postcard. We printed this John Lennon quote many times. It says it all.

- **People who don't change...** one of our favourite Miles Davis quotes. Reprinted version here for Vortex Jazz Club, also used on the

back of Penny's trade card (see **C14**).
(middle) • **Ashes to Ashes – The Penny Rimbaud Archive** [2009] object: clear acrylic box 11×30×25 cm with ashes. Penny does not collect stuff, he doesn't hold on to things, he gives a lot away, and so he doesn't have an archive as such. More recently, his annual ritual of burning unused work has now been replaced by the deeply satisfying click of the delete key.
(bottom) This is most of the remaining physical Bracketpress/Penny Rimbaud material held in the Special Collections archive.

W4 • Hand cut stencil of part of Crass logo used for **Love Songs** front cover design and experiments. Hand cut stencilled lettering not used in final design.

CRASS / LOVE SONGS

C7 • **Crass You'll Ruin It For Everyone**

official bootleg re-design for Pomona Sounds [2001]. Centre spread Nike advert by Christian Brett.
• **Love Songs** [2003] 4th proof with Penny's cover suggestion.

• **Love Songs** [Pomona Books, 2004]
• Unbound breaker copy – displaying pages from finished book.
• Couple of notebooks relating to **Love Songs** – song order list + typesetting notes for laying out of *Ten Notes on a Summer's Day*.

• **Love Songs** [Crass Records, 2012] Crass Records were given back the rights to the book in 2009, and republished the book as part of the *Crassical Collection* series. The typefaces were changed and the lyrics ran chronologically with hardback cover design by Christian and Gee.

• Crass and Existstencil Press CD-R audio pre-masters [2008–09]

• **Crass The Crassical Collection** – the remastered back catalogue with new packaging 2010–12.

• Notebook showing initial notes for *Crassical Collection* design brief from Penny [2008].

• **The Last of the Hippies** [Active Distribution, 2009] A nicely designed book ruined by poor binding and a not-fit-for-purpose guillotine.

• **Shibboleth** [Existstencil Press, 2014] – book cover design by Christian

Brett and Gee Vaucher
• **Shibboleth** working proof.

W5 & W6 • **365 Aphorisms +1 2013–14 / In The Word – @pennyrimbaud1 tweets 2015–17.**

Since the end of 2013, Penny's main writing platform has been Twitter. The original intention was to tweet 365 aphorisms in 365 days and then finish, but having finished he came to miss the challenge and to this day he attempts an aphorism a day, claiming somewhat darkly that it, "Keeps death away." In part drawn from an idea to do something with the one-liners from his notebooks, the majority of the aphorisms come through meditation, which Penny has been practising for the last few years. The two corridor walls include all 1,400+ tweets from 3 December 2013 up to 11 April this year.

W7 • **The Dream Is Over**

A page from *Turn On Tune In Cop Out* – inspiration for this came from Yoko Ono's *War Is Over* poster. Not an abandoned or unpublished poster idea, nor a comment on Brexit or Trump. Printed for this exhibition because we like it and it looks good BIG!

AND HE WAS CUT DOWN

At the end of 2008 when the idea of the Crass remasters series was first talked about, along with re-issuing *Acts of Love* and releasing the *EXIT Ices Tapes, In the beginning...*, the previously limited cassette-only *Christ's Reality Asylum* (the final release on Crass Records) was also touted for an overhaul (see **W8**).

The original text was first published pre-Crass in 1977 (see *bottom shelf of C8*) which also saw the first appearance of what was to become the Crass logo designed by Dave King. An edited version was recorded for Crass' first record *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* (see workbook with page designs from *Love Songs*) but didn't appear on the first pressing due to the Irish pressing plant refusing to press the record. The track was replaced with 2 minutes of silence

titled 'The Sound of Free Speech', and a lengthier version of the track 'Reality Asylum' was issued as a single. For the remastered version, rather than reprinting the original text, Penny wanted to use a new poem *And He Was Cut Down*, and asked Alice to illustrate it.

C8 (top) • **And He Was Cut Down**

• **Workbooks:** revised mock-ups of book version of the poem and suite of 40 images by Alice.

• **Workbook** of just the images showing the different collaged layers opposite the final image.

• **Original collages** by Alice, the basis for the final illustrations.

(bottom) • **Christ's Reality Asylum and Les Pommes de Printemps** [1977] foolscap, Gestetner printed, card cover with additional loose sheets of annotated pages.

• **Original typescript** introduction for CD booklet.

W8 • **The Apples of Spring – Christ's Reality Asylum**

[2009] these two framed pieces show the work-in-progress illustrations and type layout for a CD booklet. This, as with some of the other aforementioned projects, was abandoned by Southern Records (Crass Records distributor). It was thought that if this was produced in the same format as the *Crassical Collection* packaging it would have incurred large financial losses for Southern and wasn't worth the risk.

C9 (top) • **Scarlet Pools – Working Illustrations**

by Alice Smith [2006], inkjet print, unique, quarter bound in newsprint from *The Sunday People* 18th June 1972. Produced to show Penny the working illustrations for his novel.

• **Working illustrations.**

• **Page layouts** for proposed b-format paperback edition.

• **Original typescript.**

• **Scarlet Pools Workbook 2006–2012** includes source material for illustrations, layouts for original format and re-design for proposed paperback book format.

(bottom) • **Scarlet Pools – a contemporary romance** [2006] handmade

edition used for the Manchester Metropolitan University book arts Sitting Room exhibition which toured internationally during 2006–08.

- Early masthead designs.

POETRY

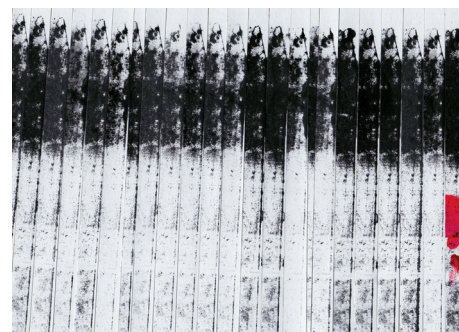
- C10 • How?** [2006] pamphlet. Penny's re-working of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, written for the London Jazz Festival.
- Original typescript of *How?*.
 - Printing block for cover plate by Bron Jones (Eve Libertine).
 - Sketch of poster idea referencing Pen's over-exuberant table-thumbing performance where someone got accidentally showered in candle wax. The gig is now fondly referred to as 'The House of Wax'.
 - **Oh America** typescript and page layout for an abandoned pamphlet.
 - **Methinks** [1st ed., 2006] chapbook produced for The Sound of Stones in the Glass House exhibition.
 - mock-up with red card cover
 - **Methinks** [2nd ed., 2011] pamphlet.
 - **Africa Seems So Far Away & I The Indigene** [1st + 2nd ed. 2009]. Pamphlet originally published to coincide with Penny's collaboration with Japanther and Dan Graham's *Dinosaur Death Dance* at PS122. A long-standing organisation in New York's East Village, which actively promotes and challenges the boundaries of live performance.
 - Initial cover designs featured a wooden 'fertility' doll which we later decided against using.
 - Interior layout and mock-up of the pagination.
 - Card template for jig set-up used to trim the fore edge of partially bound pamphlets.

AND NOW IT RAINS

- C11** • Sketchbook showing the imposition plans for this series of poems.
- Layout featuring one of Penny's illustrations as a chapter frontispiece.
 - Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, 1886 edition, the size and design had a direct influence on the overall design for *And Now It Rains*. Unfortunately we didn't have the funds to print two-colour like the original, but made for quite a

handsome book.

- Handmade hardback mock-up.
- Letterpress printed green jacket, with paper sheet marking set-up for jig to hand score and crease prior to binding.
- **And Now It Rains** [2007] a series of poems, with illustrations by Penny. The wraparound green jackets were the standard Bracketpress edition, brown for Penny's copies and one blue copy which was presented to the late John Tavener who Penny had hoped to work with. This was a difficult book to produce by hand, compared to the pamphlets, having 128 pages, made up of 16 A4 sheets, folded down to 8 signatures and hand sewn sections. The imposition had to be done, then masters printed off which were then photocopied at the local print shop, albeit on quality paper. Then all the sheets were folded, turned and slit with a butter knife to cut the crease at the foot of the pages. Sections were then hand sewn and glued into the cover. When it came to doing a reprint we decided that a digitally printed short-run edition would be the way to go. When I set about re-designing for the new format I began looking for an alternative type to the Caslon we'd used in the original. I suggested, not for the first time, of using Stern, and not for the last time this idea was rejected by Penny. When Gee put forward the idea of resetting the book in a sans serif, my silent reaction was, "That idea will go away." And ignored it for a while, but the idea kept on and when I questioned why, Penny said he wanted all the humanity stripping out of the text. This triggered off a memory of a disparaging remark someone once made about Adrian Frutiger's Univers typeface, something to the effect that it looked like it had been designed by a machine and lacked humanity. So, having tried Rimmer's Stern type yet again, I tried Univers and I think it worked well, so it became a template for the subsequent poetry collections, *America, and how!* and *The Universal Other*.
- Bookcover layout with stripe marks repurposed from another project.



Christian Brett: collage [2011] made up of silkscreen off-cuts. The original source of the image used for *And Now It Rains* bookcover.

- **And Now It Rains** [2nd ed. 2007] trade paperback.
- **And Now It Rains** [3rd ed. 2015] here with plain black Bugra Bütten jacket and title plate – due to the shoddy work of the printer, even after having half the run re-printed, the covers still weren't all up to scratch, so we introduced the jacket to disguise the imperfections. Similar issue with *The Universal Other* which was printed at the same time.
- Unbound printers proof of 3rd ed.

W9 • The Eye of the I [2007] letterpress printed New Year Book – unbound sheet for concertina binding.

C12 • The Eye of the I [2007] letterpress workbook with first impressions etc. Patterned paper idea, eventually abandoned.

- Various layouts for pamphlet format of *The Eye of the I*, which we decided against doing as it was far cheaper to produce the eventual smaller concertina format using off-cut stock.
- **America, and how!** [2012] Trade paperback.
- Original sheet of fountain pen splatter used for the front cover and gig poster (see **W3**).
- **Landscape** [2009] Two poems, *You Brave Old Land* and *Seen Light Conclusive*. Abandoned pamphlet design.
- **The Universal Other** [2015] poetry collection, a companion piece to *And Now It Rains*. Trade paperback using similar cover design.
- Notebook showing original half and full-title page layout.
- Jackets variations made up from spare Zerkall and Hahnemühle paper stock.

TV monitor • onoffyesno.com

Penny's website. From the end credits sequence of *Girlfriend in a Kimono* [2005] a film by Dominic Thackray.

ESSAYS

C13 • *Freedom is such a big word*

[1st ed. 2006 + 2nd ed. 2009], hand sewn pamphlets, with letterpress printed flyer and envelope used to post out the pamphlets.

• *Smile or Smirk? the da Vinci mode*

[2007] hand sewn pamphlet exterior and page spread example. Original typescript. Opening title page with frontispiece collage by Gee Vaucher.

• *If you think you have the answer... you didn't hear the question*

letterpress printed card, a line from *The Conveniences of Philosophy*.

• *The Conveniences of Philosophy*

[2007] pamphlet. This essay was originally commissioned by Tom Hodgkinson for the *Idler* magazine. Penny asked them if it would be okay if I typeset the piece rather than them doing it. This coincided with their graphic designer leaving and subsequently led to me being asked to take over the production of the *Idler*. After an initial re-design, revising their typefaces, a couple of issues later completely changing their house-style, logo and format (see examples C15).

W9 • *Ideas are such a bad idea* and *I Am Not Therefore I Buy*

– two lines from *Cop Out* and *Conveniences*. Again, poster ideas for Existstencil Press/Pictures on Walls, 2008/09.

Both have been produced as letterpress printed postcards.

I Am Not never quite worked the first time round, but the framed example here was, as sometimes happens, re-designed in 15 minutes the night before this exhibition opened.

• *Turn On Tune In Cop Out* letterpress printed broadsheet, with opening text from *Turn On Tune In Cop Out* essay. Produced after Obama's election victory and posted with our Whitman New Year book to arrive on the 20 January 2009.

C14 • *It's A Deal® – Drug Polemics or Psycho-Eugenics?*

[2008] mock-up

for unpublished essay written for *Vice Magazine*.

• *Turn On Tune In Cop Out*

[1st ed. 2008 + 2nd ed. 2011] hand sewn bindings and page samples.

• Original typescript.

• Various notebooks.

• Hahnemühle Bugra Bütten swatches for pamphlet covers

Letterpress printed ephemera:

• *Daytime: the illumination of the intolerable* postcard

• Penny Rimbaud trade card

• *Ideas are such a bad idea* postcard, returned with a handwritten addition from Gee.

• Web card: 'there are no real things at onoffyesno.com', the reverse reads: 'disengage'.

• *Nobody's Child* [2008] pamphlet.

Essay later published in the *Idler* with revised typefaces and design.

• Original typescript and examples of early title page designs.

W9 • *Kerboom* page spread from *Nobody's Child*, re-worked for inclusion in *Tricking the Impossible – The Selected Essays* book.

• *Or Maybe Tomorrow* and *Dancing with Francoise Sagan*

cover design [2015] – two unpublished novels which pre-date *This Crippled Flesh*. Both books are an attempt at a more conventional narrative. At the centre of *Or Maybe Tomorrow* is Rimbaud's father's descent into Alzheimer's before the disease was really talked about. Currently being re-edited for publication next year.

• *Birth of a Notion* [2011] page spread from first draft typesetting (see C15 for final setting).

• *Birth of a Notion* essay title page from *Tricking The Impossible*.

C15 • *The Idler* unbound printers proofs showing spreads from:

• *Nobody's Child* [2009].

• *Particular Nonsense* [2010].

• *Birth of a Notion* [2011] + original typescript.

• Bracketpress and Existstencil Press adverts opposite *Ceci n'est pas...* [2012] title page + original typescript.

• *Our Need Feeds Their Greed*

broadsheet. Originally a 'stop press' addition to the version of 'Nobody's

Child' published in *The Idler* No.44.

• Small mock-up for *Birth of a Notion* pamphlet imposition. We decided to collect all the essays into one book, so we never went ahead with the pamphlet.

• Miniature paper mock-up for 8pp. softback cover for *Tricking the Impossible*. Note no text on the outside of the cover.

• *Tricking the Impossible* 1st typeset proof, returned with Penny's mark-up. *Tricking the Impossible* is made up of 15 essays (4 of which are previously unpublished) along with a revised version of *The Eye of the I* and the previously unpublished poem *The Artless Mechanic*.

• Letterpress printed broadside: **Get Out of Your Own Way** [2014] a quote from jazz drummer and teacher Freddie Gruber.

W10 • Poster: **Artwank – Bracketpress and Penny Rimbaud's Big Box of Bollocks** was the original title of this exhibition. Still don't understand why this was a non-starter – perhaps a meeting we missed?

Along with material from the Bracketpress archive, a number of unique items have been loaned for this exhibition from the personal collections of Gordon Wilkins, Penny Rimbaud and Gee Vaucher.

For notification of exhibition events and book launch, please ask a member of staff, or visit: specialcollections.mmu.ac.uk

The exhibition is part of RANDOM Archive, a collaborative project with Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre exploring text and type.

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FREE ADMISSION

Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm

Thursday 10am – 7pm (term time only)

Saturday 12noon – 4pm (term time only)

