

ON COLLABORATION – Paper versus Print

On a cold and wintry evening down in Gowanus, Brooklyn, Ruth Lingen from PACE Prints and Rachel Gladfelter from PACE's Chelsea Gallery (and formerly of Dieu Donn ) gather to admire and name the long-awaited fire-engine red press setup at their brand new interdisciplinary print and paper studio, and talk about the art of collaboration in print and paper, and the role of perfection and chance in papermaking practice.

A lot of papermakers have a very fixed idea of what print is about. Coming from a print background myself, I'm not sure how easy it is to make certain distinctions – the overlaps feel quite tangible to me. I am interested in how the mediums of print and paper are coming to have a conversation with each other more though – with for example print techniques, say silkscreen, being borrowed over into paper and how they are coming to inform each other much more now. Professional collaboration started out in print and lead into paper and Rachel was at an interesting talk regarding collaboration at the EFA in November where she was set against two printmakers...

RG - I felt very different. Because like the specific project that Luther Davis was working with Ian Cooper, where they had this really set, designated project that Ian had strategised beforehand though it was obvious that Luther had definitely contributed in the collaborative sense but it was pretty set up. With John (Kessler), that approach was kind of visceral. We didn't want to set a definite goal or inhibit the project by making constraints – I mean we had an overall goal but we wanted no constraints on the individual projects - we didn't want to spend too much time on it if something wasn't innately working. We would move onto the next thing and come back to it... we weren't setting out to edition anything either.

RL - Do you think that's anything more particular to paper than to printing?

RG - No, I think it was just that specific project...

RL - ...maybe just something particular to the three people that were up on stage? Because, I kept thinking about all these questions about collaboration. To me it just so depends on the definition - and everything just depends on the individuals that inhabit the collaboration.

RG - It's the relationship that determines whatever direction it's going to go in.

RL – Well, my path has always included printing and sometimes included papermaking and only sometimes has it been only papermaking so... I feel like when I come to papermaking, I'm thinking about it like a printmaker.

How would you describe that?

RL - I think it's projects that involve registration systems, that's really the big thing. I am always thinking about multiple ways of doing something.

RG - That's interesting because that is something I witnessed and became more aware of working directly with Steve (Orlando) and Paul Wong, of course. As a side note - I know I was introduced to printmaking and I had a kind of mysterious fascination with it but then went immediately into papermaking – was romanced by monoprints in printmaking - and then went immediately to paper. So, watching Steve set out registration tabs for everything and structuring the process a lot changed my whole method of thinking – its just something I didn't think about before.

I think that's definitely something that as a trained printmaker that one brings to the table for sure.

RL - Right. The first thing I always think is, "How are we going to register this?" Because the thing we say with printmaking is that it begins and ends with registration. It always does, you know...just aligning things. And in papermaking that's a really tricky thing too – you can push things a little more if you can figure out different systems for that one thing that to me seems like a printmakers obsession – that I see less of with papermakers, for sure.

RG –When I was introduced to papermaking it was like, "Here you go, this is papermaking, these are the things you can do with it – to start with you are going to learn how to pull a sheet properly" etc. And even though you can tab that down to the amount of pulp you put in the vat and the very specifics, its still very feel-based. You stick your hand in the water, if it doesn't feel like it's the right consistency, you adapt, and it was that level of adaptation that I think I was always keen on. I thought at first, well, this is never going to be the same thing twice.

Because you use muscle memory and sense memory and subcutaneous memory that aren't ... you can't put them down in a recipe.

RL - Right... it's less based on the precision of a machine...

RG - Well, I don't know because you can do precise things but ...

RL - Yes you can but, for example, the press mechanics tell me when the pressure is exactly the same. **This is one thing that was put to me by Kurosaki Akira in Japan, because they tend to use less machinery in their papermaking and their tools are very ergonomic and simplified... he used to love to say "papermaking is primitive" by which he meant it's a very simple process - just something flat with holes in it draining water with a deposit in it that gets left behind – its pulp and water and gravity and little more than that.**

In saying that what I interpreted as his inference was that all the finesse that we know to be necessary in creating great paper, and exact paper, all the decisions are being made in your hands - are actually located within the human being and those adjustments are actually being brought to these very primitive materials and you can actually come up with something amazingly beautiful and that represents human thought – some human has put that into these very ordinary things and transformed them.

RL - Yes and the reflection of the spirit is coming through – like if you are calm or whatever you are doing... what I've heard too about Japanese papermaking, too. You are focused on the here and now...

RG - But its interesting though – what makes that different from anything else..?

RL - Well I think that's true in certain facets of both printmaking and papermaking.

If you are in a collaboration with an artist – that kind of focus, that is different from pulling sheets of paper. It's a different kind of focus. I was thinking about chance and the role of collaboration and I think it is so dependant on the two personalities and at what point they swing either way If you put together someone who is a perfectionist papermaker... with an artist together whose working methods are very controlled, you know chance will be minimized. If you put any two people together, the element of chance would vary depending on how each person allows that to come into their working method. Chance is not an element you want when you are pulling sheets because - you don't want it! You want to just stay focused, for consistency.

But the chance always comes in in a certain way with the kind of bodily adjustments that you are making, like you think about making paper on any different day and in a different season – that's kind of how chance influences it – its not so much on chance per se, but on human movement, humidity, etc. So it's the small variables and adjustments as well...

RL - I was actually wondering - what do you identify as chance?

Well that was something Rachel brought up, because you mentioned the role of chance in the John Kessler project, so maybe you can elaborate on that...?

RG - I think that specific project had a huge amount of chance because he was intrigued by working with the pulp very crudely. He didn't really want to try to do anything with the paper that he sensed it didn't want to do. He let the pulp react; he let the amount of water in the pulp determine where the pulp was going to go and it was purely chance. We had these sculptural parts surrounded by pulp and stuck them in the press and it was an experiment. We would want to see what other forms and sculptural elements would do at this point, and what would that do at another time...

The way I read what you were saying I thought the inference was that paper affords the artist as an aspect to what they are able to do – how they are able to change their process a little bit... they are able to come into the studio and deal with chance as an issue and kind of let these mistakes happen and respond to them and sort of improvise.

RG -Yes, that's not just with Kessler, it can also be true in a very different situation, like with Kate Shepherd, her work is extremely tight. Having her come into a new medium that is perhaps looser... (I think it's the chance aspect of a new medium also – just introducing something new). At the early stages you aren't probably going to jump into doing a precise watermark or a very tightly evolved work - you will kind of introduce the artist to the medium, if they want to delve into and get in there up to their elbows and play with it... she took that as exploring a more playful side – what she did with the project was much more playful - just looking at elementary blocks of colour next to each other. It was

just because that's the beginning of the introduction of the medium and you can always go much further with refinement.

It was fun to be part of them playing and exploring and seeing what you can find out by taking a chance or a risk and doing something a little bit different but it's hard to explain the indirectness of the result. The problem is, you know when you try something you assess something in print immediately but with paper you have a couple of days to wait so you come at it in a different mood than when you made it. It's an interesting thing - just having that many variables in your project making (the fibre length, what pulp is at hand and prepared in the case where you make more spontaneous decisions, humidity in the air, a couple of days to dry)...there are always things that can come into it and I guess that's where the chance plays into it.

RL - I think that is really true of papermaking – especially just talking about that drying period – that's a big thing because everyone has to come back and reassess. There's no instant gratification. Then it becomes a really fresh thing for them to see again and when its dry that's where I think there's a little bit of chance to it. "What? I didn't want that colour!" and "Look how it dried!" I think one of the great advantages that papermakers have that is that artists don't necessarily have references for papermaking as they might in printmaking. Most artists have been exposed to printmaking whereas I think papermaking in general, is a little more undiscovered. Here in New York City, there is definately more exposure to using paper as a direct art form.

RG - I think in a shop like Dieu Donn e or PACE, the chance aspect can be minimalised – you can allow that to happen or you can not allow it to happen at all. It has a humidity-controlled drying environment, allows some more control over that, but if you are making paper in a barn in Pennsylvania where I started, you'd be drying things up against a slake wall and hoping that they didn't fall off. And there's a huge amount of chance in that. (Laughter)

RL - Well that's where you really learn too. That's where you figure things out. Over the years I've done a few of these things called 'Dog and Ponies', where you pack up supplies in a box and go off somewhere for a week with an artist and do a print project... I had a drying system of blotters laid out over folding chairs and using office tables on top of things to flatten. That really forces you to look around and use chance to your advantage. I think it's a great way to expand your creativity. I think the best collaboration consists of maximum creative power from both people involved...a sort of synergy – if you get a good team together the sum is really greater than its parts.

What is the knack of a good collaboration? What balances are you trying to get right? It's really something quite different from other ways in the art world of making art...

RL - For me you have to do some homework before you have any kind of interaction. You have to have a grasp of what an artist is doing with their work. Then its all about listening to them and developing an interactive language about the process. After that you try to find the right techniques so you can enable them to create the best aspects of their work, aesthetically, creatively, intellectually...

To achieve that – what is your challenge as the collaborator?

RL -A collaborator who consistently does good projects probably enjoys it, that's big apart of it. I hear actors and people in performance say - that if you are going outside your comfort zone and you are pushing a little bit, feeling a little bit insecure – that's when you go that extra step and do something that maybe hasn't been done before or that's really exciting. That's kind of the mindset that you want to be in, I think.

RG - I completely agree. I mean its all about reading someone – its listening and one of the main goals of the collaborator, I think – it's the knowledge of where this artist is in their career and what they are trying to do next – at that point when you come together and meet each other for the first time you are a little nervous: "How does this person work in this kind of environment?" also, "Have they worked in that way before?" You know, you have a billion questions to ask for a point of reference.

But then after a long time with someone ... then where are you taking it after a series of subsequent projects?

RL - Well I was thinking about Chuck Close and counting up to date the number of projects we have done, and I think it's about eight... I can assure you that, maybe to everyone else it looks like it's sort of the same thing (this is not counting those early pieces that Joe Wilfer developed) but with every single piece that we did, we were pushing the technique as much as we could at that time. There was always that feeling at the time "Oh my God, is this gonna work?" ...and doing enough of a test to say "I think we can do this."

Chuck is very much about pushing something to the next level and I can look at each one, and say - they have been the best possible things we could have done at the time, under our specific set of circumstances. Because, he puts so much time into looking at the project and he makes this huge effort to understand the process and everything you do – which is good – but its also nerve wracking because he knows if you did something and its not quite right, you know.

It can be a little stressful when you are working like that, but it can be exciting – not just doing the same old thing over and over...And maybe to someone else they might say, “This one looks just like that one”, but I could tell you all the differences and all the ways that things have gotten more complicated.

I was lucky - I studied and worked with Joe Wilfer, and he was the one who was really responsible for the early Chuck Close paper projects. And when he set up the Spring Street Workshop, (which was the first workshop for PACE editions), Joe really wanted to have a versatile shop – open to doing all different kinds of things and not feel like we have to keep a 'signature' look.

RG - For artists its attractive too because they can feel like they can do anything or take things in any direction – not just the directions that the studio is known for.

RL - you have to try to understand the questions that they are asking to figure out what they are attracted to. Paper has a particular sort of luminosity that other mediums don't.

RG - Yeah there are all these adaptations you can do to it and... **RL** - Even when it is an opaque colour there's something a luminosity – because it's just one piece... not anything on top.

But is also about light – and how paper interacts with light when it hits it whether the light is reflected or refracted or going through the paper – then if you can start interfering within that space it's an exciting place to be intervening.

RL - I think so, absolutely.

When you can't get over a certain hill in the creative process, what are you going through?

You've come in for five days, nothing has worked yet, and you have to go in the next morning and go at it again.

As the collaborator – what's going through your mind, and then how do you get something over that tipping point where it starts to take on its own momentum?

RL - You have to try to stay positive and just plough through it ...I think I've only experienced it once when we just had to bail on things that just weren't going to work...

RG - When you think about the amount of time invested in it at that point – when you just give something a couple of days break and coming back to it in a different mindset you know that sort of thing can be really effective. Usually when that has happened in fact, the most amazing things come out of it - they were amazing because you know the struggle...but yes, positivity for sure.

RL - Keeping a really positive attitude in collaboration is really important. I feel like I can't emphasise that enough, because you have to be this steady force behind this thing ...

RG - ... and confident...

RL - ...Well, you're supposed to look like you know what you're doing, right? (Laughter)

So if you could liken collaboration to another profession...?

RG - Well, sometimes you have to be like a dentist – you have to take someone into a really painful situation – when you are trying to get things to work right it feels somewhat like you are pulling teeth...getting something to work out.

RL - But I think the artist and the collaborator is such a different kind of collaboration from an artist and say, a writer, working together on a book - people that do completely different things and they come together - it's very obvious who is doing what – Our kind of collaboration is a sort of melding.... you have to go over onto the artistic side then the artist has to come over onto the technical side.

So its different from being say two musicians in a band, where you have two distinct instrumentalists for example...?

RL - Yes, well... it's more close to that than the writer/musician...

Is it like... sharing a microphone?

RL - Well, not really because the one person knows how to sing, and the other doesn't, right? One person can read music and the other improvises. And I think they're both working together to make something. That's it!

For example, if I work on a project with a sculptor – I know nothing about sculpture or what they do in their studio - but you don't necessarily have to - you find the ground where you meet for this collaboration... where you crossover.

You were talking about translation and language - the creative language that the artist cultivates and then brings into the studio... wants you to speak with them or at least understand... there are certain words in different languages for example that you can't translate - and then you have to find what group of words or what scenario will point exactly to that idea – and all languages have that – they have these little pockets where they go in and describe something that another language cannot follow and where that particular language shows its own character.

I was also thinking about the relationship as one with a navigator, who is trying to map out the medium. Papermaking after all doesn't have the same huge and sometimes burdensome history that painting does, for example. It doesn't have that canon yet. So there is this sense of voyages of discovery, really – that you are going out and mapping a 'New World'...crossing new landscapes with each other and bridging different skills to finding your way across some new frontier of some kind.

RL - That's absolutely it - because you have to take some kind of description and make it tactile and make it real. One of the most challenging things I've done was a print project with Robert Ryman and he kept saying, "I want the project to look like a patch in the wall".

So we were thinking, "Well, okay..."

Because, the way he spoke about it was in these very poetic ways - about the qualities that he wanted - and it was never ever about more ink or white or any tangible specifics – it was always in this sort of language that you had to absorb and translate and try to use. And it was always process of elimination - you would bring him some things and he would just say: "This isn't working."

RG – "I like what you are doing with this but it's not quite..."

So you would just have to read the air in some way and just learn from his kind of decisions...what he would decide in another situation.

RL - Yes. And I think it was a process of about eight weeks or something before he settled on what he would do.

- the perfect patch in the wall.

RL - Yes.

At MoMA there is an exhibition on at the moment of a book entitled 'The Printed Picture' and the interesting thing about the display is how they seem to be showing the quality of a print process by how well it is able to exact a given texture. Almost always what is printed is something textural like hair, or grass, or the surface of the ocean... It would seem that print is always trying to get at texture, to overcome or subdue it – and I was wondering if that is a preoccupation with printmakers – that we are always somehow trying to capture surfaces...

RL - Yes, you get all excited about it.

It seemed somehow like that was the measure of a print. Do you have any thoughts on whether or not that is the same for a young medium like papermaking, or different somehow? There have been a lot of exciting paper projects that involve deceiving the eye, like the work done with Robert Gober...

RG - I think that is a huge aspect to it, certainly. I think the one thing that paper can offer as well is the three-dimensionality that is going on. Like Mel Kendrick's recent project, where he was casting into a rubber mould directly from a wood grain and with the screw heads in the surface and really capturing all of that detail in the paper pulp relief... and Peter Seminsky just did that cast bucket project with Steve (Orlando)ⁱ with the cast ropes – and there are

some elements to it where you can see that this is definitely paper, it's not as convincing as a really perfect texture in print – but people are certainly going after texture in some way. In that case the *tromp l'œil* was not Peter's specific goal per se, but I think achieving a certain texture in paper is romancing a lot of artists and directing them in that way.

RL - But certainly it's those inherent qualities in paper that are what I love about it. It's the way it feels a little bit more like fabric and that it's sensuous – paper really is. I tend to like paper that isn't super-defined, super-hot-pressed with deckles minimised - I like seeing the hand because that's the beauty of it – the handmade quality of it.

In terms of professional print shops, printmaking is reaching new levels of refinement and perfectionism - the human hand is ever closer to being taken out of it. Papermaking is not at that point yet, but it's probably headed in the same direction. Aldo Crommelynck, who worked with PACE editions for a long time, his prints were like that. They were very pristine and you couldn't even believe human hands had touched them!

It's like an argument with the commercial printing process that is being made by hand printers – like John Henry and the steam drill. But, there's also space for that to go another way - to take a commercial look and to mess with it – to use the perfection and then still have yourself present in a way – to still have the presence to pervert the perfection. That talks against going that far.

RL - And that's what I personally respond to.

Walter Hamady for instance having said that one should work mistakes into what one is doing...

RL - Yes, "One flaw for the gods"... I studied with him for 3 years and was his papermaking assistant.

And how did he influence your ideas and your collaborative approach?

RL - *Walter Hamady*?! He had a *great* influence on me. I went to Wisconsin because he was teaching there, papermaking and typography, the whole bookmaking thing I was already into then and still am, really - just the combination of what you could do with all the elements brought together by the papermaking and the printmaking combination. It's that level of handmade beauty – refined to a certain point but not all the way. Although you wouldn't say that about his work – it was pretty refined! A hundred percent.

But also a real level of craftsmanship and an irreverence that goes along with it to balance it – you want to be able to refine things, but then do whatever you can to creatively get away from that. He did all kinds of books and paper and played all kinds of little games with the medium that were like hidden secrets that were inside it – if you knew – about paper and print. His work was full of those contradictions... always based in a really high level of craftsmanship and really knowing what you were doing.

You couldn't pull it off without that.

RL - No you can't. And a love of papermaking – I got that from him. And also just really playing with it and experimenting – he was really big on that.

What do you think makes an artist come back to the studio?

RL - It can be a number of different things – the biggest reason is obviously that it's informed their work and they want to come back to either repeat or extend what they learned the last time. Also some artists who work alone in the studio like coming into a collaborative environment – getting ideas from other people, other sources.

RG – I think the community environment of the studio is interesting and very welcoming to some artists – where they work one specific way in their own space and try to go in another way in a collaborative environment and see what comes out of it.

Yeah, like John Kessler said that he developed his two-dimensional practice from not having had one previously. After having worked in paper...

RG - Part of that was just moving out of his studio where he works a certain way and he has an assistant and they work in a very set way together – and taking yourself out of that and in a way making yourself a little bit vulnerable and taking a risk.

RL – Yeah, and I think if you came back that obviously meant you thrived somehow or got something substantial out of the first collaboration – and I think it is almost always mostly informed by changes in the work.

What are the particular challenges that are paper's own – that aren't really the same in other media?

RL - Besides the drying time lag? I mean, that's a big one, I think...

So the transformation from wet to dry...

RG - And that it's not instant gratification. You know – it's waiting a couple of days to find out... and the anticipation – which is kind of a good and bad thing.

RL - One of the things that is difficult - could be a specific kind of work that's very hard-edged, or linear...

RG - A specific piece that I found really difficult was "Licks" with Paul Henry Ramirez - who had the initial idea obviously to work with very clean lines and forms in paper trying to do what he wanted to do in paper – I could not even fathom it at the very beginning of the project. I think he made me realize there are thousands of different ways of approaching this – the project made me think about paper in a different way, as a kind of multilayered process instead of trying to do many things at one time. Also, "How is this process going to work a series of times?" And I think that pushes the envelope when you collaborate with somebody like that, but I think also made Dieu Donné do different things with paper.

In the end it was a complete five person collaboration to run an edition of 100 of those pieces so not only are you working with him but all five of you – and controlling all five of your hands – and designating who is doing what and that sort of thing. That's a challenge – running an edition, you know, where the hand is so involved.

Between you, you really have to have an understanding as a team as well.

RG - Yeah – designating who is doing what and who is good at what part of that project became essential. One element of that project was a reverse blowout and for a hundred times I had to blow a misting hose over part of the mould to release some pulp... I guess there is the large chance aspect to that at the time because of the water pressure levels... In the old space at Dieu Donné if somebody would flush the toilet the water pressure would, you know... dwindle. So that's a chance aspect that was part of that process, too! It would start to just trickle out and often I would have to start over, so in the end we literally put a sign on the back of the bathroom door saying, "Let us know if you're going".

Within the team that's what I did, Paul did the registering and couching, Cat and Steve pulled the base coloured sheets and poured a formation aid was on the back of the moulds as Paul and I were couching – you got into a real rhythm and at the first part of the editioning stage you need to determine who is going to do what and what is going to work most efficiently...but then you don't talk about it anymore, you just go and everyone has the feel – that's the muscle memory thing - and I don't think that's any different when it comes to papermaking or printmaking or anything else.

RL - Right. For me – I think the collaboration that takes place in paper versus in print has so many more similarities than differences. The difference is just the medium. The collaborative process is pretty much the same. I think we'll really be able to go so far, and really Dieu Donné has pushed it so far... in the last 10-15 years it's been incredible.

RG - And I think partially just more people – exposing more people to it and cultivating a larger web of papermakers and influence and intelligence about the medium. Ruth, do you think that papermaking is – that artists are more interested in delving directly into the medium, so-called "getting their hands wet", with you as a collaborator in paper than in print?

RL - Again I think it's just person-by-person. The last couple of people that have come in to look around PACE – one was ready to go, saying, "Yeah, yeah, lets start something!", and the other person said nothing... there's this response time, "Ok, let me think about how I can apply that to my work".

There is an interesting dynamic between different departments in an art school as well, ...sometimes you sense the sculpture department and the printmaking department have these special resonances with each

other and I think sculptors... Phil Sanders was saying he considers printmaking a three dimensional medium.

RL - Printmaking is *three dimensional*?

Yeah, he was saying that you are thinking three dimensionally - so that's what it is. Conceptually you are dealing with perceived three dimensional space so intensively that you and sculptors are doing the same thing, the product is just something different. Does papermaking hold affinities to anything in particular? It seems a lot of painters come in to work in paper.

RG - I would say it has a strong affinity to sculpture, really. Building a surface – in the process you really see a surface becoming built over time and you see it become one in a way in the end. And that's one of the most amazing things about paper as a medium is that you can separate these layers and physically, ever so gently, peel them up and really see how its being built on top of each other, perhaps even dissect it if need be. How I became introduced to papermaking wasn't directly through print, it was through sculpture. Through my sculpture professor, who had us casting pulp and doing other interesting things with it. So maybe that's just where I'm coming from that I've always kind of seen it sculpturally – but I think it's very active in the layering process so it becomes easily seen as sculpture, to me.

RL - Certainly from studying with Walter Hamady, paper became this beautiful thing that could activate an artist's book. It was this gorgeous surface that you could make any way you wanted. It would be the basis for the feeling behind everything we did.

I was thinking about Dieu Donn  as a place that not only does artwork but also custom orders – and how that influences how you to collaborate in paper – they are two very different things.

RL - They are really different.

They must inform each other, cross-pollinate, being so closely related in your daily process. You are seeing paper from another angle – making custom paper and then making suggestions to artists about what paper can be and what it can do... but I guess what you are saying about books and the quality that custom paper – it can totally transform what is going on in the work as an object – and so pulp is kind of a strange animal as a medium - because it has this identity as paper – and the paper itself can have this artistic function, resonance and language all its own, and then you can have work made in all these other ways in pulp too.

RG – It's not only the visual aspect but also the tactility, the specific sounds it makes – a wrinkle or a crinkle...

RL – ...it's so beautiful...

RG - ... and how those sounds affects what you are visually seeing.

RL - And the amount of pleasure you can get from it too. I have a book of Barsham Green, a papermaking book from 1967, its all handset type and its printed on this beautiful, pretty rough, pale green paper. It's the most fantastic thing to read, a little book about what their production was like, at the time, and it has photos of them pulling sheets this big (arms outstretched), its just - to me its such a great thing that you can have that. Walter was saying – handmade paper is this amazing thing and it's one of the elements that you should control if you want to do these kinds of artists books. You know that was his thing – handmade books. You should make your own paper and have complete artistic control - do your own binding, set your own type, make your own images... and once you've done all that... well, you didn't have to write your own story.

You could steal the poetry.

RL - But I love picking up books – like the Kentridge Receiver book – that paper just went beyond anything we've ever seen!

I didn't know from the name whether the author of the poetry in the book, Wislawa Szymborska, was male or female when I was reading, and when I checked and found that she was a woman something clicked into place – I thought, "Yes, it *is* a woman's voice". Something about the way the book felt, despite the rather strong masculine presence of William...

RL - Yes, that strong black and white graphic...

I hadn't been able to get over the feeling that there was this femininity inherent in the book – and I think the paper was very much part of communicating that or bringing that out in the words printed on the page.

RL - Sue wanted the thin abaca more and more gossamer, it kept getting thinner and thinner – I could barely move the paper to the press. the tiniest bit of wind would take it!

RG - They were so thin.

RL - And I just kept saying to Sue – a little thicker just a little thicker. But the feeling was very beautiful. A final question – how is a collaborator made?

RG - I feel like it's about observing someone – I mean Paul (Wong) was pretty transformational for me.

RL - That was Joe Wilfer for me.

RG – As an intern I would stand on the side and watch Paul work with Robert Cottingham and feel so lucky to be able to observe that process ...

RL - I think you are lucky if you can attach yourself to someone who has some experience and is committed to collaboration, who loves it.

RG - Watching the precious moments of interaction – where someone reads someone else, and knows when to give and when not to give and that sort of thing - be firm but not too firm – know where it needs to go but don't over assert oneself...

There was an amusing anecdote that Paul was telling once about Glenn Ligon coming in to look at some large marbling that had been done for him, and Glenn started at the sheets for ages and ages and ages, becoming more and more absorbed in thought, and Paul was saying eventually he had to say to Glenn, you know, "Glenn... is this... acceptable?"

RG - I was there and he was looking at them a long time – maybe half an hour. It was a good silence – or at least that is what the context felt like... it was kind of discovering something new – and thinking to himself about all these new possibilities... and Paul was just standing there but eventually having to ask...

RL - ...that is a very hard space to be in – that moment. When you're kinda... you've put your heart and soul into it and waiting for a response... I think the collaboration thing – people talk about it in acting - you know the chemistry between the actors. That is absolutely a big part of collaboration – is just, chemistry between people.

And I think it's not necessarily your personality so much – it's more your being able to come to that halfway point and beyond. I really believe that.

You hear stories about people that do different processes... and how forceful they are about having someone adapt to their process. They might have a very set process that people have to adhere to... it isn't negotiable. I mean Aldo did great prints in that genre because of that – because he wasn't willing to do some 'funky' aquatint... but it's a different... he came out of the atelier system. And there you told people how to do it and that's how they did it. It's a different thing really...

That the interesting thing about collaboration really - is where the definition goes because it can swing the full spectrum... of the minimal to the maximal... there's a lot of grey area...

RG – "Where do you draw the line...?"

RL - And also - what is people's conception of what collaboration is now? Because, when I started making papermaking projects and I edited these pieces for Alan Shields for about 10 weeks for the Light Fluffy Gear series - back then you didn't get much credit for being involved – you might not be mentioned on the documentation sheets. Now, it's almost the other way around where you feel you have to put the interns on the list even if they've been there for half a day... now, I think of a collaborator per se as a person who is so critical to the project that the project could not have happened in that way without them. It's not just someone who comes in and lays down felts or something – it's someone who determines the direction and made it happen that way – Or it wouldn't have happened without them. You're completely vital to the project. And I think what is different to each project is how visible or invisible you are to the process and the project – in your hands - whether the artist wants you to be there or not be

there. To be just this facilitator or to just really get in there - and that's just something that you have to delicately approach with each new collaboration.

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