

KERNPUNKT Press

written by Entropy | February 28, 2017



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Interview with Jesi Buell, Editor

How did KERNPUNKT Press start?

I'm a librarian so I'm surrounded by literature every day and I get to curate our fiction and poetry collections. I see what people are publishing and I felt like there was (and is) a hole in terms of literature that fell outside of specific patterns. It is almost like the difference between a weekly sitcom and an arthouse movie. You can appreciate both but I've found that the former is more abundant than the latter and we, as the audience, miss out on the specific benefits that the (more) scarce art form has to offer. I always have found books that do not follow formal plot structures or language use or traditional imagery to be more interesting as it broadens my perspective. So I started KERNPUNKT Press during my maternity leave for my daughter because I wanted to provide a platform for these writers. During my six weeks recovering, I recruited some help and set up KERNPUNKT to help promote 'experimental' literature.

Tell us a bit about KERNPUNKT. What are your influences, your aesthetic, your mission?

We place a large emphasis on experimentation and what we mean by that is we value writing that is more art than entertainment. While plot is always important, we are very invested in language, symbolism, and exploring the taboo. We appreciate the unfamiliar and we appreciate writing that makes us work towards an understanding. We like metafiction, poetry-like prose, and works that test different forms and platforms. Our mission is to have a catalog full of work that speaks to large Truths in new and unexpected ways.

Can you give us a preview of what's current and/or forthcoming from your catalog, as well as what you're hoping to publish in the future?

Our forthcoming title is *Postludes* by Matthew Burnside. It is a collection of digital and print short stories that all deal with transformation. Here is an excerpt from "Bestiary":

“Perhaps everything terrible is in its deepest being something helpless that wants help from us.” Over her desk is pinned the quote which (the night she got the call that her Father’s skull filled with blood, an unimpeachable joy rippled through her, causing fat droplets to plink upon the page) scratched itself upon her heart.

We used to ask, “What about small/independent press publishing is particularly exciting to you right now?” We’re still interested in the answer to that, but we’re even more interested to know what you think needs to change.

What is exciting about indie press is that much of it exists outside commercial constraints and that it supports experimentation. What’s exciting is that it is a bunch of people working (for little to no monetary benefit) solely to promote and distribute art. It exists outside the superficial world in many ways. Invariably, as with any group or endeavor, there can be nepotism, there can be greed and competitiveness, ego and elitism. However, I would say we have found overall that this is a very supportive and passionate community, full of people all trying to achieve some form of the same goal.

How do you cope? There’s been a lot of conversation lately about charging reading fees, printing costs, rising book costs, who should pay for what, etc. Do you have any opinions on this, and would you be willing to share any insights about the numbers at KERNPUNKT Press?

Our goal, at this time, is to at minimum break even—so everything that is not a (financial) loss, is a win. Books have a longer life than most ‘goods’ so sales will continue to come in as long as someone is talking about your book. The point isn’t to get rich—it’s to help talented artists get some recognition in a highly competitive world. We want to continue to build a base and reputation so that we can continue to support our artists and further their works in the future.

Recent releases from KERNPUNKT Press:

