

Projective Industries

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Interview with Stephanie Anderson, Kate McIntyre, and Karen Lepri, Editors

How did Projective Industries start?

Stephanie founded it in 2008, with the poet Sam Amadon, just as they were leaving New York for PhD programs in Chicago and Houston, respectively. One thing that small presses facilitate is exchange and community across large distances. Since then, Kate joined in 2011, and Karen joined in 2014. We maintain our own cross-country ties between Chicago and New York.

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

The idea of a set mission might rankle the three of us a little, despite our Olson-influenced name. But we do have goals—one of those, which is surely true of all small presses, is to participate in and encourage the growth of the poetry community. Another is to insist on the value of the “small” in small press. We value the handmade, the patience and attention to detail that the crafts of printing and sewing require. As objects, the aesthetic of our chapbooks lies happily between the DIY aesthetic of zines and the gorgeous history of book art and fine press. In content, we look for work that is formally experimental, but we try not to fall too firmly into one aesthetic niche. We don’t want everyone to write the same way! So some of our books will be austere or minimal, while others will be manic and exuberantly expressive.

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?

This spring we published Stacy Szymaszek’s *Journal Started in August* and Angela Hume’s *melos*. Looking at those side by side might give you a sense of what is similar, and yet different, about the manuscripts we tend to choose. Angela’s eco-lyric language is sparer than Stacy’s, and stretched across the page. Each word is given a lot of breathing room. The everyday-oriented language of Stacy’s *Journal* is condensed and super-charged. We’ve also just released Rowan Evans’ *Freak Red*, which has its own wild form—words like thickets on the page, spare and dense at once. And we’re about to release Kate Schapira’s *Someone Is Here*, which is a quiet, thoughtful book that stays with you longer than you realize. You read a poem in the morning and set it aside, and then remember it in the evening and realize it’s been hovering

lightly over your thoughts all day. We're still deciding about this year's books, but we can tell you that we're very excited.

What about small/independent press publishing is particularly exciting to you right now?

It's so great that small presses are currently receiving well-deserved credit for their work. We've seen some chapbook presses shutter their doors, which is sad, but there are also lots of new and exciting presses starting up. And that's part of the beauty of the thing, the proliferation and ephemerality inscribed into these scenes and book objects. In fact, small press publishing is increasingly becoming *the* model, as technological changes allow for new modes of production and as presses move toward a smaller ethos with the increasing quality of print-on-demand. The possibilities for small publishers are really proliferating right now.

We also think the presses that have been around for a while are starting to feel that there's enough support right now to stretch and evaluate and experiment. We are close press-buddies with DoubleCross Press, and their new series of shorter, all-letterpress chapbooks is exquisite.

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 Projective Industries?

Costs of operation are no joke—and ours went up quite a bit when we started letterpressing a few years ago. But we raised our prices to cover the difference—though we still try to keep them as low as possible. We really feel that production costs should not be passed on to the author, even at the prospective author stage. Our open reading period will stay free. We just don't expect to make money at this. It takes a fair amount of privilege to be able to say that, but we all have day jobs. And we care about investing in our community. We'll keep doing it until we can't afford to.

Recent Projective Industries releases:

