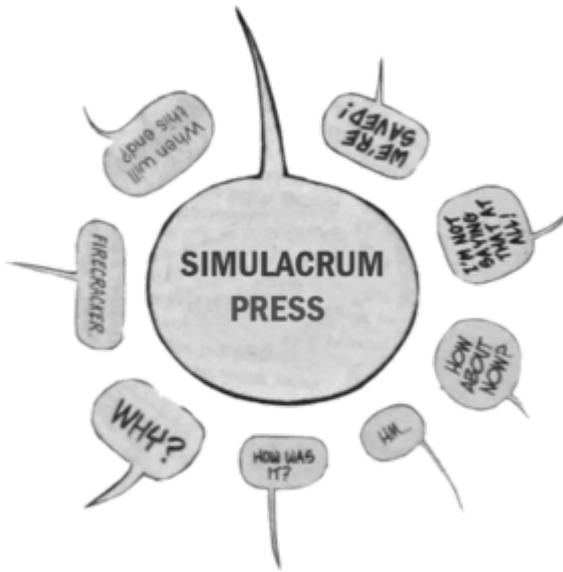


Simulacrum Press

written by Entropy | August 20, 2020



[Website](#)

[Submission Guidelines](#)

Interview with Sacha Archer, Editor

How did Simulacrum Press start?

Easily. Too easily. Hence the name, Simulacrum. Fake it 'til you make it is the platitude that fits the bill. It just occurred to me (then, not now) how easy it is. You print something that someone's made, then let people know they can buy it. Of course, there is no 'make it' in 'Fake it 'til' unless it's production and the work itself. Not the production of a Broadway musical, not today, but. Nike swoosh: just DO it. Be a messenger. No, no 'make it,' just... making it. Without the expectations of a proper business there's nothing to lose (but money). But at the beginning—and now, I just said/say to myself, if you're losing money and people aren't interested, then stop.

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

I entered walking backwards. It's common enough. It was other concurrent small presses like The Blasted Tree, Puddles of Sky Press, above/ground press and no press which turned me on to the concept of small press and the possibilities therein. Then, later, when I'd claimed to have a press of my own I began to learn about the history of small press, especially Canadian, i.e. blewointment, GRONK, Ganglia, curved h&z, etc. But in the end I just

want to make beautiful publications of exceptional work and the joy is in the fitting, the trying—looking for the harmonic, the “ah ha!”

As to my aesthetic—I try not to think about it. I mean, are we talking about the kind of work that I accept, my design tendencies or my own inner compass? You’re right, they do all intersect. I think of my aesthetic as rather conservative. That’s kind of a laugh considering the work I publish, the forms the books take, even my own work, but it holds water. For instance, if something screamed punk, that might not be down my alley, but then again, I like to think. That I’m open. Minded. But generally, very generally and not specifically I like work that is stronger than it is loud. My great mission is to publish fantastic work by absolutely anyone anywhere that doesn’t easily find a home, to publish work that is confident and willing to take a risk. Not edgy work, though. I’ve come across this word a lot in journal submission guidelines and come to the conclusion that it basically means bad work, boring work, work that tries too damn hard to be cool. I don’t like cool. I like good.

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?

The latest publication from Simulacrum is hiromi suzuki’s amazing suite of photographed typewriter poems, ‘Found Words from Olivetti.’ There is something cinematic about these poems—dark and broody, romantic, and a suggestion of narrative. To my mind they align with Miles Davis’s soundtrack for the film ‘Ascenseur pour l’échafaud.’

This year also saw published Kyle Flemmer’s equally exceptional sonnet cycle ‘Correctional Sonnets’ which uses three forms of white-out: correctional fluid, tape and pen to craft visual sonnets. These poems reference erasure, but instead of erasure poems, the word is bypassed for the textures of those aforementioned materials.

There are a bunch of really exciting projects forthcoming. The next two I’m beginning to circle are one by myself, Sacha Archer, and another by Zane Koss who has had a number of chapbooks previously, all worth reading and all markedly dissimilar (evidencing his versatility and deft skill). Koss’s project is a conceptual book called ‘Site Specificity.’ Each page has one word, or at least, arrangement of letters. The book begins with the word ‘site’ and is followed by permutations and mutations of that word. It is a strangely material work though it is simple text on page. My own project, a loose leaf series of concrete poems titled ‘MODELS (of economic recovery)’ responds to an article I read about how professionals are using letter shapes to describe possible outcomes of economic recovery as we attempt to resume life despite COVID-19. All I will say at this moment is that it is a forceful trace of the body channeled through rubber stamps and is suggestive of far more than economics.

What do I hope to publish in the future? I’m always looking for the same kernel—work that makes me stop, think, and which demands that I learn

something—all wrapped up in a style that, alone, knocks me off my feet.

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.

Micro-press publishers (as that is what I'm really interested in here, rather than small press on the level of Coach House or Book*hug, for instance) are doing it as they want to. They're generally not bound by grants or sales or really anything except what they want to publish and how they want and can afford to publish it. Many of the people I know who are doing it don't have a great deal of money laying around and this makes their efforts in publishing something to be applauded, something which should be highly appreciated—time given, money given, effort given. It's all giving. Hopefully you break even. And of course the poetry itself, the reason for all of it, the wonderful, unbelievably wonderful work! But, I assume when you ask what needs to change, you might be thinking about representation and identity. Can there be greater inclusion? I hope so. I can only speak for myself and I'm looking at the work, not the author. I relish the opportunity to read any and all submissions that I receive. If you make experimental work, why not submit? But it is a fact that personally I receive few to no submissions by POC and fewer by women than men. Concrete has been a white male dominated game historically, but fuck that—it's for everyone and anyone. When I have published women and POC I have usually had to solicit the work. And I generally don't like to solicit, mainly because I'm lazy in that respect, or because I have children and a full time job. Everyone, please submit—I want to read your work—it is nourishing in an extremely important way.

Concrete poetry is enjoying a moment of expanded recognition. More and more can be found in magazines both online and in print. And, a lot of it is quite good! So, the opportunities for publishing such work are increasing. Not only concrete, but the wide umbrella of *experimental* (whatever that means). This is what is exciting to me about small/micro-press publishing—the publishers are putting out some really fucking amazing work that I think would have been much more difficult to get published a decade past.

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 Simulacrum Press?

Reading fees are garbage. Poets make no money from the publications, so why the fuck would they have to pay to have their work read? Garbage. I've received a cheque from a magazine a few times for at most 20 bucks—no, once I got a 50 dollar cheque. I'm not complaining—I appreciate the gesture, but let's be honest, 20 bucks—even 50 bucks isn't going to help you much. Imagine interview fees for a job. I think if the publisher can't afford their venture, perhaps they shouldn't be doing it, or they should modify their

operation.

No, I won't go into the numbers, but I break even. The kind of work that I publish in the form that I publish it doesn't get an awful lot of sales. There is a historical legitimacy to the book proper which is both absurd and understandable. But I think that the kind of work you can encounter in micro-press publishing is where it's at. Sure, it may not fit perfectly on your bookshelf, that accounting of one's intelligence.. but it is where poetry is most free, and so obviously, best.

Recent releases from Simulacrum Press:

