

01

TRADI
TIONS
of
PUNCHMAKING

CLAUDE

C L A U D E

Claude Garamond worked as a punching engraver in early 16th century France. He created the Garamond typeface to be utilized in book-printing and as body text. The Garamond typeface is known as an “old-style” serif typeface, with letters with a relatively organic structure resembling that of penwork, but with a slightly more structured, more upright, design.

Garamond died in 1561 and his punches and matrices were sold off by his widow. Unfortunately, his type fell in popularity and was utilized less and less in book printing after his death.

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or

Composition, or typesetting, is the stage where pieces of movable type are assembled to form the text. The person charged with composition is called a “compositor” or “typesetter”.

Traditionally, manual composition involves selecting single type letters from a type case, placing them in a composing stick, which holds several lines, then transferring those to a larger type galley. The compositor gradually builds the text of a page letter by letter. After assembled to fill a page, the type is tied together into a single unit so it may be transported without falling apart. A gallery proof is then made and inspected to ensure the accuracy of each individual line.

TYPESETTING

03

ASSESS MENTS

before
PRINTING

SAMPLING

Imposition or imposing is the process by which the tied-up assemblages of type are converted into a form ready to use on the press. A person charged with imposition is a stoneman or stonehand, doing their work on a large, flat imposition stone.

Lock-up is the final step before printing. The printer removes the cords that hold the type together, and turns the quoins to lock the type into place. This creates the final forme, which is then able to be taken to the printing press. The first copy is proofed again for errors before starting the printing run.

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04

NEWSPAPERS

and
PUBLISHING

EXTRA

TYPE

AND

PRESS

The working of the printing process depends on the type of press used, as well as any of its associated technologies. You can distinguish a traditional letterpress printer from a digital printer by its debossed lettering.

Hand presses generally required two people to operate them: one to ink the type, the other to work the press. Later mechanized jobbing presses require a single operator to feed and remove the paper, as the inking and pressing are done automatically. The completed sheets are then taken to dry and for finishing, depending on the variety of printed matter being produced. With newspapers, they are taken to a folding machine. Sheets for books are sent for bookbinding.

05

PHOTO PRINT

creation of

PHOTOPOLYMERS

The letterpress printing process remained virtually unchanged until the 1950s when it was replaced with the more efficient and commercially viable offset printing process. The labor intensive nature of the typesetting and need to store vast amounts of lead or wooden type resulted in the letterpress printing process falling out of favor.

In the 1980s dedicated letterpress practitioners revived the old craft by embracing a new manufacturing system which has allowed them to create raised surface printing plates from a negative and a photopolymer plate. With these new plates, designers were no longer inhibited by the limitations of handset wooden or lead type.

Light

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