

Bob Cobbing and the book, curated by Lawrence Upton at U.W.E. December 2011 – January 2012

This exhibition was not the easiest thing to document photographically because of the setup of the room and its being quite full of students. And because of the need to get done before the building closed.

The students were very cooperative and didn't seem to mind being inconvenienced as we set up; so I tried to document around them, in order to minimise their disruption.

These photos give an idea of what you could have seen; and, hopefully, the next one will make it possible to do better documentation.



These were all books which, in their time, could have been bought for relatively little.

The next photo includes **Verbi Visi Voco** which was printed commercially thanks to a grant in the early 1990s. Still available. And next to it there's Bill Griffiths' **A Book of the Drama** of which a few remain – and that shows what can be done by hand.



The third photo is a little varied.

Along the top shelf you can see the cover of *Poetry Review* printed in house in the mid 1970s when the Arts Council cut a grant. The image is by Cobbing, an ink duplicator monotype in litho offprint. Next to that are two home-baked books (a term I borrow from the press of that name run by Michael Weller.

Below that are some reprints and others commercially produced.

What was by my count Cobbing's last major text, **with our tongues** which has him sailing out in and in search of new territory. He produced it one copy at a time on a colour printer. I managed to get it litho printed.

Behind that, **destruction in art** – a small selection of his 1960s work.

Then Richard Tipping's recent and I think impressive book; and then a reprint of the Ceolfrith catalogue **Bob Cobbing and Writers Forum** from 1974; then **Collaborations for Peter Finch** reprinted a third time; and then finally a reprint of Cobbing's first solo book **ABC in Sound** from 1965 when it was called **Sound Poems**. All printed as paperbacks.

Thus, we have a few books not known or hardly known to Cobbing + one which comes from post Cobbing editorship entirely but is included to show continuity. (Tipping had an earlier WF publication in the 90s; and this one here arose from discussion with him about, initially, reprinting.)



The next image shows Cobbing's **The Five Vowels** – ink duplicated on cards, with necessary and messy changes of ink, and then stuck together carefully with commercial sticky tape. The whole put in an envelope with an image / title page stuck on.



After that, a variety of items, some disintegrating now.



You can see **Third ABC in Sound** – there never was a second in the public domain and it seems not to have survived in a collected form – which I hope to see back in print if I can raise the money.



And some greetings card publications, some paste ups from **a movie book** showing his cheap and cheerful method of masking unwanted material, knowing how his (analog) scanner worked; the title page from a mid 90s photocopier reworking of ink duplicator work from 30 years; and a copy of **Concerning Concrete Poetry** which will be a wf e-book soon, soon



One man's work, one man's sound belief in his own judgment

Lawrence Upton

February 2012