

## Power-Knowledge

Despite its obsolescence letterpress has the distinction of creating much of the language, rules, and forms of typography that we use everyday as such it is more present in our lives than ever before.

The first anthropologists made assumptions about the past based on what they understood of their own contemporary societies. In the cabinet of curiosities, archeology and relics were used to confirm existing order or display superiority and power.

Using our own preconceptions and assumptions we will (mis)use the ultra-specific and exact object in letterpress for other functions in order to get immediate proximity to the source of our subject and use it as intended.

The background to the workshop is an understanding of hierarchy and composition in type. If type's existence is to serve text then text is king, as such we will undertake some readings.

Day 1 - a.m. Working in groups of two\* you will be given an object from the letterpress department. Find alternative functions for this thing, consider its inherent qualities and possibilities.

p.m. In your groups observe hierarchies, using your objects bring them back to the studio. Tutorials

Day 2 - a.m. Short talk / reading (Åbåke)  
Develop ideas.

p.m. Tutorials

Day 3 - a.m. Print in letterpress.

p.m. Presentations

\*According to Foucault's understanding of power, power is based on knowledge and makes use of knowledge; on the other hand, power reproduces knowledge by shaping it in accordance with its anonymous intentions. Power (re-) creates its own fields of exercise through knowledge. <sup>(wiki)</sup>

Foucault incorporates this inevitable mutuality into his neologism power-knowledge, the most important part of which is the hyphen that links the two aspects of the integrated concept together (and alludes to their inherent inextricability).

Foucault was fascinated by the mechanisms of prison surveillance, school discipline, systems

for the administration and control of populations, and the promotion of norms about bodily conduct, including sex. He studied psychology, medicine and criminology and their roles as bodies of knowledge that define norms of behaviour and deviance. Physical bodies are subjugated and made to behave in certain ways, as a microcosm of social control of the wider population, through what he called 'bio-power'. Disciplinary and bio-power create a 'discursive practice' or a body of knowledge and behaviour that defines what is normal, acceptable, deviant, etc. – but it is a discursive practice that is nonetheless in constant flux.

A key point about Foucault's approach to power is that it transcends politics and sees power as an everyday, socialised & embodied phenomenon. This is why state-centric power struggles, including revolutions, do not always lead to change in the social order. For some, Foucault's concept of power is so elusive and removed from agency or structure that there seems to be little scope for practical action. But he has been hugely influential in pointing to the ways that norms can be so embedded as to be beyond our perception – causing us to discipline ourselves without any wilful coercion from others. <sup><https://www.powercube.net></sup>